

# NATIONAL REVIEW

**DOPEsick**

A TOUR THROUGH  
HEROIN, U.S.A.

Kevin D. Williamson

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Ground Zero in  
the opiate epidemic  
isn't in some exotic  
Taliban-managed  
poppy field or  
some cartel boss's  
fortified compound:  
It's right there  
at Walgreens,  
in the middle of  
every city and town  
in the country.

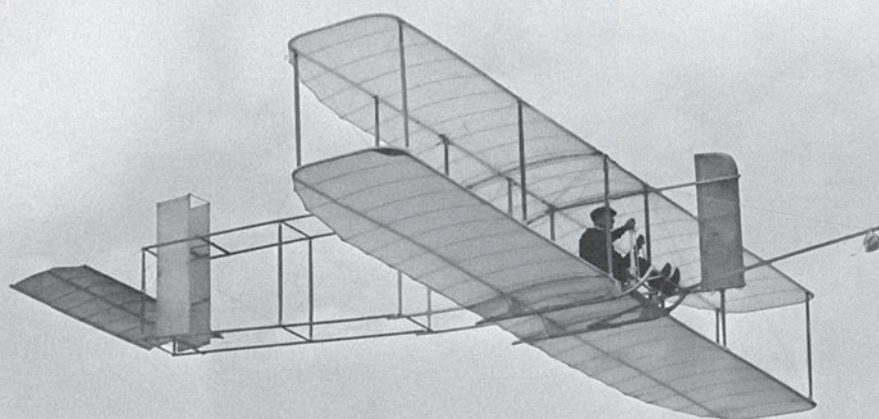
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*by Jay Nordlinger*
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## Timeless Classics

Samuel Goldman writes well about the value of “traditional” education (read: classical education) and studying beautiful things (“Reclaiming Traditional Education,” December 31, 2015). He aptly takes on Marco Rubio’s pandering remarks about welders and philosophers, and attacks the line of reasoning that leads people to think that time spent studying Aristotle is time wasted.

I would like to suggest that where Professor Goldman misses the mark a bit is when he suggests that traditional education changed for the better by incorporating modern literature.

I recommend William F. Buckley’s conversations with Mortimer Adler on this subject. The “great books” are sidestepped for modern literature at our peril. I know Professor Goldman is not prescribing a modern-lit class at the expense of the great books, but I would go so far as to suggest that modern literature be scrupulously avoided while in school until one has had a grounding in the classics. The well-trained mind of the curious reader will lead her to seek out the best in modern literature on her own.

Also, it seems as though Governor Christie caught the line about building fewer rock-climbing walls and incorporated it into his stump speeches. Good.

Caleb Johnson  
Washington, D.C.

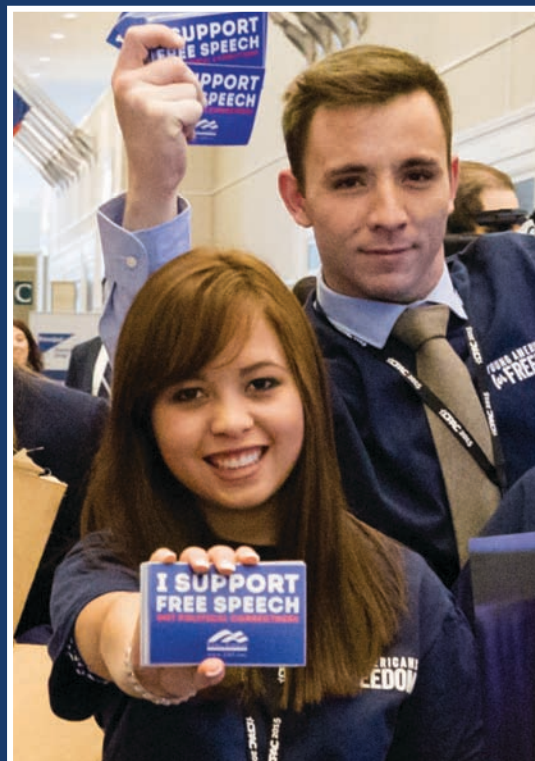
SAMUEL GOLDMAN RESPONDS: There is much to be said for an orderly procession from the original sources of Western civilization to more recent works. Unfortunately, the structure of the modern education does not often allow this. At most universities, it is nearly impossible for a student who arrives on campus with a long list of distribution requirements and no exposure to ancient languages to start with Homer and move slowly toward Joyce—even if she wants to. In practice, students and professors have to work in “zigzag” fashion, oscillating between modern and ancient.

The results of this strategy are perhaps less satisfying than those of a more coherent curriculum. But I don’t think they’re necessarily terrible. In any case, that’s how I learned what I know of the Greek and Latin classics.

But great books did not cease to be written in the first, or fifth, or 13th century of our millennium. In addition to Aristotle, Augustine, and Alighieri, students should read Balzac, Conrad, and Dostoevsky (to mention only a few authors). I am less confident than Mr. Johnson that well-educated readers will seek out these writers on their own. If they aren’t taught, they will be forgotten. Conservatives should do everything we can to prevent that from happening.

Letters may be submitted by e-mail to [letters@nationalreview.com](mailto:letters@nationalreview.com).

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<b>Standing Up for Faith &amp; Freedom Seminar</b>	April 8 to 9	Reston, VA
<b>High School Conference at the Reagan Ranch</b>	June 23 to 25	Santa Barbara, CA
<b>National High School Leadership Conference</b>	July 6 to 9	Chevy Chase, MD
<b>National Conservative Student Conference*</b>	July 25 to 30	Washington, D.C.
<b>Summer High School Conference at the Reagan Ranch</b>	August 11 to 13	Santa Barbara, CA
<b>High School Conference at the Reagan Ranch</b>	October 20 to 22	Santa Barbara, CA
<b>Fall Conference*</b>	November 10 to 12	Reston, VA

\* For college students only

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# The Week



Text

■ Who knew the Democrats were that picky about which kind of socialist they prefer?

■ Hillary Clinton's speaking fees—\$225,000 a pop—from Goldman Sachs and other big-deal Wall Street firms continue to be a campaign issue. At an MSNBC debate in Durham, N.H., she was asked whether she would release transcripts of her remarks. "I will certainly look into it," she replied. But having looked, she decided no—unless everyone else released transcripts of every speech he had ever given. What could be in Hillary's speeches? Promises of fealty to Wall Street? Of course not. But denunciations of big banks? Also no. She undoubtedly gave a dull tour d'horizon, for which Wall Street players gave her big bucks—and hoped to have later access. So, at the end of the day, Hillary would be shown to be greedy, plugged-in, and timid. No amount of money could seduce her to abandon those qualities.

■ The Clinton campaign labors to make her candidacy an epoch in the advancement of womankind. Latest wrinkle: It is sexist to support Bernie Sanders. "When you're young," said Gloria Steinem, "you're thinking: 'Where are the boys? The boys are with Bernie.'" In other words, young women for Sanders are self-hating sex-bots. Former secretary of state Madeleine Albright upped the ante: Sanders supporters are damned. "There's a special place in hell for women who don't help each other!" she thundered. But worst was this thought from Hillary's husband: "People who have gone online to defend Hillary . . . have been subject to vicious trolling and attacks that are literally too profane often—not to mention sexist—to repeat," said Bill Clinton, who has seduced and reportedly attacked numerous women, not online but in the flesh. Sanders believes in the equality of the mud-sill, with no distinctions of sex. The effort to make him a sexist is cheap, self-serving, and dishonest. That is, vintage Clinton.

■ Running against Hillary Clinton, Sanders has been inveighing against a super PAC that supports her: filthy Wall Street money, you know. Howard Dean, the former Vermont governor and former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, is annoyed. He is a Hillary man. And he accused his fellow Vermonter of hypocrisy: "Frankly, for Bernie to say he doesn't have a super PAC—labor unions are super PACs. Now, they're super PACs that Democrats like, so we don't go after labor unions, but this is a double standard." Governor Dean does have a candid streak.

■ Will we ever know whether Clinton or Sanders won the Iowa caucuses? The raw vote totals aren't being released, and Iowa officials say they aren't available to be released. Four years ago, the Iowa Republican caucuses reported that Mitt Romney had won; 16 days later, it turned out that when missing precincts were accounted for, Rick Santorum had. And nobody knows to this day who won the Democratic caucuses of 1988. There are many



arguments against the caucuses: They involve unnecessarily byzantine procedures, Iowans are too unrepresentative to have as much say as they do over the party nominations, the state uses the caucuses to extort promises of government subsidies from the candidates. But maybe the most decisive reason to end the caucuses' favored position is that Iowa is no good at running them.

■ On the night of the Iowa caucuses, CNN reporter Chris Moody broke the news on his Twitter account that Ben Carson, instead of going on to New Hampshire, was going to "head home to Florida for some R&R." Moody noted that Carson was not dropping out of the race. Within minutes, Jake Tapper and Dana Bash noted on air that Carson wasn't going on to New Hampshire. Tapper said this behavior was "very unusual," and Bash said it was not consistent with seeking the presidency. The Carson campaign then issued its own tweet noting that Carson was still in the race. The Cruz campaign started calling its volunteers to tell them that Carson was "suspending campaigning." CNN's official Twitter account then said that Carson "plans to take a break from campaigning" after Iowa. Representative Steve King, a top Cruz backer in Iowa, said it looked to him as though Carson was out. Since that night, Carson, Donald Trump, and various Cruz enemies have alleged that Cruz won only because his volunteers convinced Carson backers that they should support the senator instead of wasting their vote. (Honestly, they were wasting their vote on Carson whether



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or not he had dropped out.) Cruz has repeatedly explained what happened, but CNN keeps insisting that his verifiably accurate claims are false and that its reporting was not at all misleading. Instead of a dirty trick, this looks to us like the fog of primary war coupled with media face-saving.

■ The most disappointing moment of the GOP's New Hampshire debate came when Jeb Bush, Chris Christie, and Marco Rubio each embraced the idea that women should register with the Selective Service, making it possible for America to draft women into ground combat. It's misguided enough to open ground-combat jobs to women, especially when mixed-gender units are demonstrably less effective than their all-male counterparts, but the idea of drafting mothers and daughters into combat is barbaric and would force women into lopsided deadly engagements. And make no mistake: There is no point to Selective Service registration other than facilitating a draft. A draft should be designed to rapidly augment the ranks of warfighters in a time of extreme national emergency; it is not an instrument of

be legal until Americans reach a consensus for banning it, which is not on the horizon. We are having a theoretical debate over a tiny fraction of abortions. Meanwhile, Clinton favors direct taxpayer funding of abortion—which is already a reality in several states—and would appoint Supreme Court justices who would make partial-birth abortion a constitutional right. Rubio says he would rather lose an election than quit standing for life. But it would be better to stand for life and win.

■ Trump, who advertises himself as a master dealmaker, has joined Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, et al. in the delusion that the federal government can drive down health-care costs by engaging in party-to-party negotiations with pharmaceutical companies over the costs of prescription drugs. This is a fantasy: The Congressional Budget Office studied the issue and concluded that there wasn't much to it, while researchers for the National Bureau of Economic Research considered the case of Medicaid and concluded that a bigger federal footprint in the market actually drove prices higher.

## A responsible GOP president would reverse the decision to open **ground-combat jobs** to women, not reaffirm it with a universal draft registration.

social justice. A responsible GOP president would reverse the decision to open ground-combat jobs to women, not reaffirm it with a universal draft registration.

■ In Iowa, the third rail is the ethanol mandate and subsidy. Oppose this arrangement and you will die, or certainly not win the Iowa caucus. Cruz opposed the arrangement. He said that the government should not be in the business of picking winners and losers. He said that crony capitalism was un-American, or ought to be. His opponents made hay out of this unorthodox, risky, and principled stance. Iowa's governor, Terry Branstad, the longest-serving governor in American history, usually stays neutral in the caucus. But he told Iowans they should vote for anyone but Cruz. Trump told Iowans, "Your ethanol business, if Ted Cruz gets in, will be wiped out within six months to a year. It's gonna be gone." In the end, Iowans gave Cruz victory in their caucus. We congratulate the senator on his stance, and we congratulate Iowans on rising above a special interest. At least in 2016, in the Republican caucus, they de-electrified that rail.

■ Rubio has come under fire for saying that he would ban abortion even in cases of rape if he could. (Ted Cruz holds the same view, but for some reason has not been criticized nearly as much.) Jeb Bush said that voters would hold that view against a nominee, and Chris Christie said that rape victims are blameless and should be able to procure abortion as a matter of self-defense. Christie's argument is hard to square with any considered pro-life philosophy: Does he really think that the reason abortion should generally be prohibited is to punish pregnant women for having engaged in consensual sex? Bush's is harder to answer. When this has come up before, we have advised Rubio to note that abortion in cases of rape will

There are a great many prescription drugs in a great many different forms on the market, and the idea that the secretary of health and human services is going to sit down over coffee with the CEO of Pfizer and hash out a deal is, and always has been, absurd. Insurance companies traditionally have played the role of negotiator, but they operate under a mandate—to cover "all or substantially all" pharmaceuticals in six broadly defined protected classes—that puts them at a disadvantage: If you can't walk away from a negotiation and the other side knows that, you aren't going to get the best deal possible. That's the result of the centralizing and standardizing impulse in Washington, and Trump's proposals would aggravate that problem. No deal.

■ Trump decided to skip the debate in Iowa, on the eve of that caucus. He held his own event, ostensibly to honor and raise money for veterans. He held the event at the same time as the debate. Two candidates joined him: candidates who had participated in the prior debate, the "undercard." They were Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum. Famous social conservatives. They make strange bedfellows for Trump, who has a worse record on many issues they claim to care about than many people they have denounced. Huckabee and Santorum dropped out after the caucus. This may well be the end of their political careers. And they ended them by playing Pips to Trump's Gladys Knight.

■ Rand Paul left the Republican presidential race after finishing fifth in the Iowa caucus, with not quite 5 percent of the vote. Paul was encouraged to run by his father's example—four years ago, Ron Paul finished third in Iowa, with over 20 percent of the vote. Perhaps an America still weary of the Iraq War and stirred by the Tea Party would rally to a kinder, gentler libertarian. But Rand



There is action people engage in that until they identify and deal with it, sooner or later, will cause their demise.



Everybody is guilty, as this action has never been regarded as harmful but rather as an activity to be cultivated and extended: *at birth starting to form their personal opinions.*

That is how individuals motivate themselves with behavior based on their likes and dislikes, wants and don't wants, and whatever else comes to mind over a lifetime.

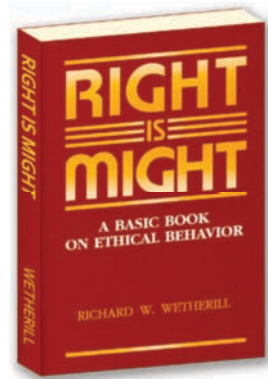
As a result, society is engaged in much conflict and other destructive behavior, interspersed with cooperation and support when their opinions agree.

However, *the creator has already provided people with a natural law to guide their paths of life successfully.*

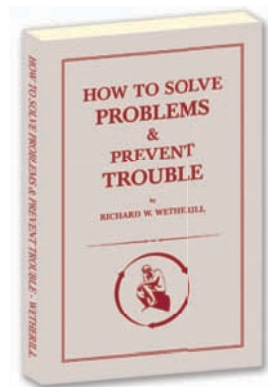
Millions know that nature's Laws of Physics are inviolable and self-enforcing, but few know that decades ago Richard Wetherill had identified a natural law of behavior. He called it the Law of Right Action, specifying mankind's thinking and behavior to be rational, honest, and morally right.

*Those who obediently conform to nature's behavioral law affirm that it has affected their lives in an awesome way. They regard the Law of Right Action as the creator's perfect gift for mankind!*

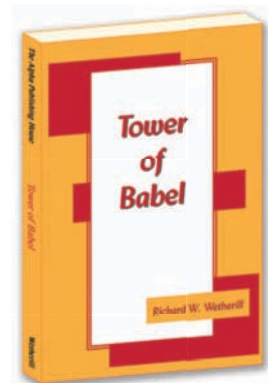
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was wrong: The rise of ISIS in Syria, Paris, and San Bernardino put a premium on strength and watchfulness, while Cruz and Rubio scooped up most of the tea-party vote. Meanwhile Rand lost the zing that comes from leading a cult. He will focus on winning reelection as senator from Kentucky. We wish him well. One Paul in a caucus makes a good condiment, even if he can't be the main course.

■ Forced to choose between Cruz and Trump in the Oval Office, "I think I would choose Trump," Jimmy Carter told the United Kingdom's House of Lords recently. The Democratic ex-president explained: "Trump has proven already that he's completely malleable. I don't think he has any fixed opinions that he would really go to the White House and fight for." Cruz, meanwhile, "is not malleable. He has far right-wing poli-

## Don't Stop Worrying about Oil

**T**wo years ago, in January 2014, oil traded around \$100 per barrel. Today, oil trades around \$30 per barrel, a level unvisited in over a decade, and consumers have been tanking up with \$1.50-per-gallon gasoline.

The collapse in oil prices has come after a surge in U.S. production. This has led many to theorize that the U.S. has finally dislodged the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from its position of dominance. Historically, the OPEC cartel has managed production to keep prices high, even when, as is happening today, a weaker global economy exerts downward pressure on them. Its apparent failure to do so at this moment has led some to forecast low energy prices as far as the eye can see. According to this line of reasoning, U.S. production will undercut any attempt by OPEC to raise prices, as American oil will flood the market and drive the price down when OPEC attempts to raise it.

As the nearby chart illustrates, such optimism is poorly grounded. To contextualize this most recent development in the oil market, we gathered data on oil production between 1965 and 2014 from the *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*. The data measure oil production in barrels produced per year. For each of the years, the chart shows the share of world oil produced by OPEC, the U.S., and the countries that were members of OPEC during the 1973 OPEC oil embargo (Algeria, Ecuador, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela).

While there is an uptick in the U.S. share near the end, the chart casts doubt on the notion that American oil now captures a share of the world oil market so large as to undermine OPEC's ability to influence the price of oil. America produced 13.1 percent of the world's oil in 2014. In 1973, when the first OPEC oil embargo sent the American economy into a tailspin, the U.S. produced 18.7 percent of the world's oil. If OPEC could send oil prices through the roof when the U.S. controlled *more* of the world's oil supply than the U.S. does at present, it seems difficult to believe that OPEC could not similarly send prices back up if it chose to do so. So what gives? Why is OPEC playing along with low prices now?

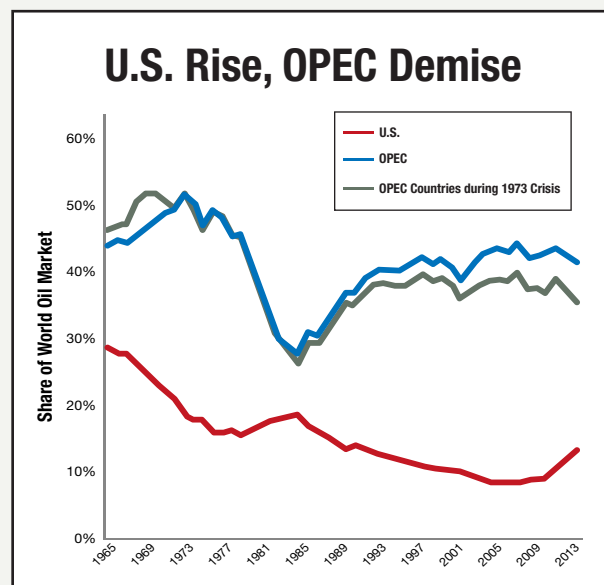
A little economic reasoning provides the answer. In the long run, the cartel will have significant pricing power if it controls a large share of the world oil supply. Middle Eastern producers have a cost advantage, with a barrel of their oil requiring about \$20 to produce, whereas the new production in the U.S. costs about \$50 a barrel. When prices

are \$100 per barrel, both Middle Eastern and U.S. producers can make money, and U.S. production can even expand, driving down OPEC's share of the world supply. But when prices get below \$50, U.S. producers who banked on high prices can be wiped out even as OPEC producers continue to make profits. Sure, profits go down in the short run even for OPEC. But the Saudis, for example, have more than \$600 billion in reserves to help them ride out a few years of low prices.

And the long-run rewards for OPEC will be significant. Small and mid-sized U.S. energy firms issued at least \$241 billion worth of bonds between 2007 and 2015. The average high-yield energy bond now trades at about 56 cents on the dollar. A wave of defaults and bankruptcies is already under way.

This wave will have a chilling effect on future investment in U.S. oil and gas, which is exactly OPEC's goal. The next time OPEC lifts the price to \$100 a barrel, investors will likely be wary of expending a lot of capital to increase U.S. production, aware that OPEC could just wipe them out again. Today's low prices probably mean higher long-run profits for OPEC, higher prices at the pump, and a share of world production for OPEC that is for the most part steady. Sorry.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT





## DOCTOR'S MEMORY BREAKTHROUGH

# New Discovery for People with Failing Memory

World's Leading Brain Expert and Winner of the Prestigious Kennedy Award, Unveils Exciting News For the Scattered, Unfocused and Forgetful

By Steven Wuzubia  
Health Correspondent;

**Clearwater, Florida:** Dr. Meir Shinitzky, Ph.D., is a former visiting professor at Duke University, recipient of the prestigious J.F. Kennedy Prize and author of more than 200 international scientific papers on human body cells. But now he's come up with what the medical world considers his greatest accomplishment — A vital compound, so powerful, it's reported to repair... even regrow damaged brain cells. In layman's terms — Bring back your memory power. And leave you feeling more focused and clear-headed than you have in years!

Dr. Shinitzky explains this phenomenon in simple terms; "Science has shown when your brain nutrient levels drop, you can start to experience memory problems and overall mental fatigue. Your ability to concentrate and stay focused becomes compromised. And gradually, a "mental fog" sets in. It can damage every aspect of your life". Not only do brain cells die but they become dysfunctional as if they begin to fade away as we age. This affects our ability to have mental clarity and focus and impacts our ability to remember things that were easy for us to do in our 20's and 30's.

Scientists think the biggest cause of brain deterioration in older people is the decreased functioning of membranes and molecules that surround the brain cells. These really are the transmitters that connect the tissues or the brain cells to one another that help us with our sharp memory, clear thinking and mental focus, even our powers to reason well. "When we are in our 20's" according to Dr. Shinitzky "our body produces key substances like phosphatidylserine and phosphatidic acid"...unfortunately they are believed to be critical essential nutrients that just fade away with age, much like our memories often do leading to further mental deterioration.

As we get older it becomes more frustrating as there is little comfort when you forget names... misplace your keys...or just feel "a little confused". And even though your foggy memory gets laughed off as just another "senior moment," it's not very funny when it keeps happening to you.

## The Missing Link is Found and Tested

It's hard to pronounce that's for sure, but it certainly appears from the astounding clinical research that this one vital nutrient phosphatidylserine (PS) can really make a huge difference in our mental wellness. 17 different double blind studies with placebo controlled groups have been involved in the clinical research of PS with patients between the ages of 55-80 years of age. Periodically the researchers gave these patients memory and cognitive tests and the results were simply amazing:

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## My Memory Started to Scare Me.

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cies, in my opinion, that would be pursued aggressively if and when he would become president.” The attack ad writes itself: “Donald Trump: Jimmy Carter’s favorite Republican!”

■ Obama addressed the Islamic Society of Baltimore. His remarks were tinged with mythology (the Founders were cool with Muslims: with individuals, in theory yes; with the Barbary Pirates, not so much). But the bulk of his speech sought to weave Islam into American civil society, and to rebuke terrorists and persecutors abroad. He urged Muslims to speak out against the cleansing of Christians from the Middle East and of Jews from France, and he portrayed ISIS and its ilk as a schismatic fringe. Politicians are entitled to try to shape the debate on their terms, even if their terms are not in fact true (jihad is grounded in venerable Muslim theory and practice). May his advice to Muslims have a salutary effect. But the process of assimilation can be long and hard: Mormons were accepted by the rest of America only after actual strife and doctrinal change. Our advice to ourselves: Speak softly, and carry big principles.

■ When David Daleiden, founder of the Center for Medical Progress, launched his now-famous investigation of potential organ trafficking at Planned Parenthood, he had to know that his work would place him within the Left’s crosshairs. It was thus no surprise when a Texas grand jury indicted him on dubious charges related to his undercover journalism. One can’t help but notice the double standard. David Gregory once waved an illegal high-capacity magazine at the NRA’s Wayne LaPierre during a contentious interview on *Meet the Press*. Gregory wasn’t prosecuted. Moreover, it would be easier to have confidence in the prosecution if Texas weren’t the American capital of politically motivated prosecutions. (Just ask Tom DeLay and Rick Perry.) But the true injustice is the notion that while Daleiden faces 20 years in jail, Planned Parenthood prospers—free to pursue its entirely legal core business, the mass-scale killing of innocents.



■ Abortion advocates are always looking for a dramatic excuse to impose their beliefs on vulnerable women. The latest is the Zika virus, a mosquito-borne malady plaguing Central America and much of South America. As epidemic diseases go, it’s mild. However, a report of increases in microcephaly—abnormal smallness of the head, a congenital birth defect—among babies born in Zika-stricken areas has women concerned, and the governments of Colombia and El Salvador have even advised couples to delay becoming pregnant. Although there is no proven causal link between Zika virus and microcephaly,

not all children born to Zika-infected mothers have microcephaly, and not all persons with microcephaly are physically or mentally debilitated, abortion proponents are using the outbreak to call for repealing the “oppressive” anti-abortion laws in countries such as El Salvador and Brazil. Those laws are in place because that’s what people in those countries want. The self-assured feminists of post-*Roe* *ade* America, unable to accept that mature, thoughtful women could reject abortion as a panacea, treat their Latin American sisters as slaves to custom or to arcane religious beliefs. If abortion were not a pet cause of the Left, this would be termed—rightly—colonialism, and of the cruelest sort.

■ The Obama administration’s executive-overreach strategy always has been cynical: The White House acts beyond its authority on some Democratic wish-list item—immigration, gun control, ordering a \$10.10 minimum wage for federal contractors—secure in the belief that its rules constitute the new reality in the here and now, whereas overturning them in court may take years. On more than a dozen occasions, the Supreme Court has been obliged to step in and bring the president to heel, most notably on the matter of his making three entirely illegal appointments to the National Labor Relations Board. The Court once again has had to step in, this time in the matter of the administration’s ordering power-plant regulations far in excess of what the actual law enables. The president wanted to make a splash before signing the country up for the costly and destructive global-warming accord negotiated last year in Paris, and so he simply ordered—as though he were a prince rather than a president—emissions reductions that will cost U.S. electricity consumers hundreds of billions of dollars while producing results that his own EPA estimates would be too minuscule to measure. Some 29 states have sued to stop him, but that would not have prevented the administration from forcing the changes it demands now as the lawsuit proceeds. The Supreme Court has issued a temporary stay against enforcing the new rules—a recognition of Obama’s strategy, and its lawlessness.

■ Officials at the Department of Health and Human Services are proposing regulations that would prevent doctors from acting on the assumption that a patient is either male or female. Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act refers back to civil-rights legislation that prohibits discrimination based on established categories including race, age, disability, and sex. As interpreted by HHS’s Office for Civil Rights, discrimination based on sex includes “sex stereotyping,” or “expectations that gender can only be constructed within two distinct opposite and disconnected forms (masculinity and femininity), and that gender cannot be constructed outside of this gender construct.” What that little treatise on gender theory would do to doctors is expose them to legal liability for, among other things, declining to participate in sex-change surgery even when in their medical judgment it would harm the patient. Lawyers and bureaucrats would stand ready to offer an authoritative second opinion.

■ Oil prices have been remarkably low for several months, to the joy of consumers and the consternation of producers. (Markets are funny like that.) When oil prices go up, it is greeted by Democrats as evidence of a price-fixing conspiracy; when oil prices go down, it presents Democrats with an opportunity to

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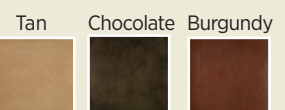
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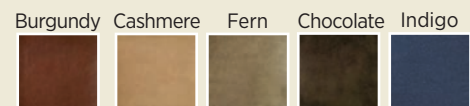
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raise taxes, which is what President Barack Obama proposes to do by slapping a \$10-a-barrel tax on the stuff from which the gasoline we consume is made. At current prices, that would represent a tax of about 30 percent, in addition to all the existing taxes that get collected between oil well and gas station. The president, seeming to parody his own economic naivety, insists that this is a tax on big oil companies, not a tax on consumers, as though those costs would not be passed along. (Markets are funny like that, too.) Here's a safe bet: If the president's 30 percent oil tax is in fact enacted, it will be somebody else's fault when gasoline prices go up.

■ The Obama administration continues to propagate the myth of the “wage gap” between similarly situated men and women, and to propose new and onerous regulations to close it. Of late the administration is hoping to shame employers into “equal pay” with a proposed regulation that would require businesses with 100 or more employees to provide additional information to the federal government about their employees' demographics and pay. The regulation is as likely to hurt women as to help them. Many women happily negotiate lower salaries in exchange for flexible schedules or fewer hours, but since those benefits will not show up in reports to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission—which will be eager to interpret lower salaries as evidence of discrimination—employers might stop offering such arrangements, opting for a one-size-fits-all approach that makes compliance with bureaucratic mandates easier. In other words, for this administration, “progress” is a victory for “women's rights” and a defeat for many actual women.



■ As if Baltimore had not suffered enough, DeRay McKesson is running for mayor. McKesson, the Twitter id of the Black Lives Matter movement, is the 13th and final candidate in the city's Democratic primary (which effectively decides the mayor's race) in April; the winner will replace retiring mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, who presided over last year's riots, during which she famously insisted that Baltimore's mobs be given “space to destroy.” Rawlings-Blake was only the latest in a string of leaders responsible for the city's transformation into a race-obsessed Slough of Despond, and, naturally, McKesson is advertising his distance from municipal politics as a virtue. Of course, it's his simon-pure pro-

gressivism that is exactly what has been in place for more than 40 years in Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit, etc., and that is to blame for those cities' present misery. But McKesson's mayoral bid may not be a total waste: If his education in the rough-and-tumble of politics turns out to be as deliciously brutal and pitiless as expected, then it also presents an opportunity to educate, to some extent, a generation of misguided young activists.

■ The British are to hold a referendum on whether to stay in the European Union or leave. The initiative comes from Prime Min-

ister David Cameron. At the outset, he maintained that he would be taking major steps to repatriate powers that over time the EU has appropriated in matters great and small. An oligarchy of bureaucrats has evolved into a government superior to the Westminster Parliament, with the privilege moreover of selecting themselves in closed sessions without any responsibility to voters in general elections. Given the resounding promise to negotiate, the nation was led to expect the recovery of sovereignty. After thousands of air miles and innumerable photo ops, Cameron returned with minute technical alterations to the small print, for instance concerning payment of benefits to EU workers. The British discovered that men they have never heard of, such as Jean-Claude Juncker from Luxembourg and Donald Tusk from Poland, hold British sovereignty in their hands and do not intend to let go. After a burst of national laughter at Cameron's performance, the opinion polls showed that those who want to leave the EU had at least temporarily moved into the lead.

■ Unanimously, the European Parliament has passed a resolution affirming that ISIS “is committing genocide against Christians and Yazidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities . . . and that this therefore entails action under the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.” Strong words. Defining the persecution as genocide gives it moral, legal, and political weight that would justify using force to stop it. Lack of will, not of permission from the European Union, is largely what has hindered the Western response to the genocide perpetrated by ISIS. Give credit anyway to Lars Adaktusson of Sweden, who led the resolution effort, for doing what he could. “Now our goal is the U.N. Security Council,” says Nuri Kino, a journalist and advocate for persecuted Middle Eastern minorities. Unfortunately for them, the political process moves more slowly than ISIS. Those who work to accelerate that process deserve recognition and encouragement.

■ Pope Francis and Kirill, patriarch of Moscow, would meet in Cuba on February 12, the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church announced a mere week beforehand, catching the world by surprise. Leaders of the two churches had never met. Rome in recent years has made overtures, but Russian Orthodox leaders have remained wary of what they regard as longstanding Catholic efforts to compete for adherents in former Soviet lands, particularly Ukraine, where Catholicism was driven underground during the last 45 years of the Soviet era. A thaw in the ancient ecclesiastical cold war between Rome and Moscow would be welcome but is not the immediate aim of the meeting between pope and patriarch at Havana's José Martí Airport. The persecution of Christians in the Middle East and elsewhere “requires immediate action and an even closer cooperation between Christian churches,” a spokesman for the Russian Orthodox Church explained. Some skeptics see Kirill as Putin's proxy and hope that Francis doesn't rush into agreements with him, but that the leaders of the two churches are speaking at all for the first time in a thousand years sends the correct message, which is that the issue that brings them together is that urgent.

■ Second in importance in Syria only to Damascus, Aleppo is fought over by forces loyal to Bashar Assad, the titular but disempowered president, and rebels, notably the Syrian Free Army, with the jihadis of Islamic State and the Kurds in the background see-



ing what they can pick up. In the midst of death and the destruction of this historic setting, the unfortunate Aleppines had tended to stay put. The current Russian contribution to peace and stability is carpet-bombing, and this has generated collective panic. Numbers are estimates, but as many as 70,000 are said to have fled Aleppo and made for Turkey a score of miles away, only to find that the border is closed. There are already a million and a half Syrian refugees in Turkey, and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan anticipates another 600,000 potentially. His foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, limits himself to saying that Aleppo is not on the verge of falling, but “is under extreme pressure”—a euphemism, surely, for a crisis with no good end in sight.

■ It is right to be polite to guests, and accommodating of them. It is also right to be polite to hosts, and accommodating of them. There’s an old saying: “When in Rome . . .” Iran’s President Rouhani was in Rome in order to ink business deals. They have become possible thanks to the West’s lifting of sanctions. Prime Minister Renzi met him in the Capitoline Museums. To accommodate his guest, he covered up the nude statues, including a Venus. In France, President Hollande had a different idea. He was to dine with Rouhani, but the Iranian insisted that no wine be served. Hollande said, Nothing doing. This is France. If you don’t want any wine, you don’t have to have any. Rouhani canceled the meal. *Çiê la France*. Last, we have a question: When a Westerner visits Iran, will the dictatorship cease to stone rape victims to death, on the grounds that this offends a Western—indeed, a human—sensitivity?

■ In the long-drawn struggle that Algeria waged to win independence from France, a number of women participated so courageously that they became national figureheads. Algerian Islam is highly traditional, however, and the imams were at great pains afterward to ensure that women were not, and could never be, on any footing of equality with men. This disparaging of women’s contribution to the cause of independence was a social issue that ceaselessly troubled the whole country. The ruling clique, for the most part secular military men, was determined to change the customary behavior that was generating retrograde inequality. In 2015, for instance, 7,500 cases of violence against women were reported, and this was only about a fifth of the real number. A new law sets penalties for acts of domestic violence, from two years in prison to 20 years, depending on the gravity of the case. Outraged imams interpret this as the imposition of Western-style reform—and so it is.

■ If you’re a critic of the Chinese government and manage to leave the country, you’re not home-free: The Party can snatch you and return you. This is happening with regularity, and it happened in January to Li Xin, a journalist who was in Thailand. He is now in the PRC, enduring what state security metes out. Presumably, governments cannot stop every PRC abduction—but they should not be mute or supine in the face of these crimes. And what does it say about the Chinese Communist Party that it must act the part of international kidnapper?

■ In our January 25 issue, Jay Nordlinger wrote about efforts to remove statues of the British colonial swashbuckler Cecil Rhodes, first from the University of Cape Town and then from Oxford. The Cape Town statue was toppled, amid student jubila-

tion; at Oxford, Oriel College, where Rhodes studied and later endowed a building, announced a six-month period for review that was generally expected to be a prelude to capitulation. Now, however, Oriel has announced that the statue will remain in place, though with a plaque explaining that Rhodes was a racist and did some bad things. Members of the Rhodes Must Fall campaign, predictably, were not mollified. Some shouted slogans while others taped their mouths to indicate that students had been silenced; and the group issued a list of demands that included a “commitment to recontextualize iconography” (i.e., destroy more statues and paintings). One protester complained that Oriel’s governance was “not a free, open, and democratic [process].” Fair enough, and it’s not meant to be. Oriel has been in business since the 1320s, and it didn’t last this long by caving in to the passions of each new moment.

■ On February 1, the Sacramento Kings basketball team celebrated the approaching lunar new year by placing a commemorative T-shirt on each seat in the arena. The shirts were decorated with the words HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR / YEAR OF THE MONKEY, along with a drawing of a monkey and some mild chinoiserie. But February is also Black History Month, for which the team was planning a separate observance that night; and when the Kings’ best player, DeMarcus Cousins, saw the monkey T-shirts, he expressed dismay at the juxtaposition, whereupon management dispatched ushers to collect them all and sent them to be destroyed. Understandable, perhaps, for a business so dependent on goodwill; but in his statement of apology, the team president did not say “We regret the misunderstanding” or “From now on we’ll stick to one ethnic group per home date,” but instead a cringing “We all need a lesson in sensitivity.” In fact, “sensitivity” has two meanings, “understanding” and “touchiness”; and if everyone could exhibit more of the former and less of the latter, the political arena and the sports arena would collide much less often.

■ Beyond the violence it does to human beings, abortion also does a great deal of violence to language: “choice,” “products of conception,” and all that. NARAL, the abortionists’ lobby, complained that a Doritos commercial that aired during the Super Bowl—in which an unborn child seeks his father’s Doritos during an ultrasound examination—was an example of the “tactic of humanizing fetuses.” One could spend a ghastly hour untangling the thinking behind that sentence, but consider the broad strokes: It takes an insanely conspiratorial mindset to believe that the assumption that a little human is a little human is a “tactic” of any sort; the idea that one must go about sneakily “humanizing fetuses” is halfway to bonkers. What do they think is in there, anyway? Rutabagas? Abortion advocates sometimes dismiss members of the fetal-American community as “lumps of cells,” but: Lumps of what kind of cells? The answer is living human cells, genetically distinct from the mother, in the form of a living human organism. That truth is so elementary and so powerful that the abortionists’ lobby must fight it everywhere it is encountered—even in Doritos commercials.

■ Football isn’t a contact sport—it’s a collision sport that prizes size, strength, and speed. These qualities make the game fun to watch but also potentially hazardous for the athletes, especially when they suffer blows to the head. In January,

the NFL reported that players endured 182 concussions during the just-completed regular season, up 58 percent from a year earlier. The jump may be due in part to improved awareness and better identification. Whatever the cause, the NFL should consider reforms to make the sport safer not just for professionals but also for the millions of kids who look up to them as they participate in youth leagues and on high-school teams. Five years ago, the NFL moved kickoffs to the 35-yard line, in a bid to force more touchbacks and thereby reduce the high-speed violence of special-teams play. Several current proposals call for banning the three-point stance and redesigning helmets. One paradoxical idea even suggests that the elimination of helmets and padding may in fact prevent head injuries: Although rugby has much in common with football, its unarmored players seem to suffer fewer concussions. Football never will be a risk-free activity, but its continued success will depend on its becoming a safer one.

■ Like many odd beliefs, the theory of “cultural appropriation” is based on a tiny kernel of truth: If you wear a sombrero, say, to make fun of Mexicans, you’re being at least a little mean-spirited. But this commonsense stricture has been expanded into the idea that all cultural attributes are the property of the group that originated them and may not be adopted by non-members without permission. The logician looks at this belief and sees a thousand blatant absurdities; the activist sees a thousand opportunities to protest. Hence the recent article in a feminist online magazine that proclaimed toe rings and bangle bracelets, among other accessories, to be South Asian cultural property, to be used by outsiders only in rare, specific circumstances (“If you are in attendance of a Hindu friend’s matrimonial functions and the dress code is Indian ethnic—but be sure to check with your host first”). So: An entirely innocent and harmless action is declared to be gravely insulting, and the offense can be expiated, and future ones avoided, only through instruction by a properly credentialed expert. That’s 21st-century liberalism for you.

■ William Tucker picked two tough issues to be expert in. Rent control is immortal in every city that has ever imposed it because protected tenants defend their stakes to the death, while nuclear power has been a hopeless cause in this country since Three Mile Island. Tucker seemed almost to relish the challenge of butting heads with the immovable, mastering the underlying economic and scientific arguments, assembling an arsenal of examples and details, and making the case for free markets and cheap, clean power over and over. One of his recurring specialties—it looked at first glance like a stunt, but it made an important point—was to showcase privileged folk—old-money rentiers, housing-court judges—who benefited from New York’s arcane rent laws. The regulators were more

like the Sheriff of Nottingham than Robin Hood. Over the years he graced the pages of *NR*, *Carter’s*, *The American Spectator*, and *itJournal*. Dead at 73. R.I.P.

2016

## A Bad Night for Conservatives in New Hampshire

**D**ONALD TRUMP won a convincing victory in New Hampshire. We congratulate him, and hope that we will not have to do it many more times.

Republicans have had only two contests in the presidential race so far. In Iowa, Ted Cruz took on Trump—pointing out that he has always been willing to use government power to help himself at the little guy’s expense—and won. In New Hampshire, the other candidates were busier fighting one another than challenging Trump, and he won big. The New Hampshire results do not make us think that Trump is the inevitable nominee. They do make us think that he will be the nominee if he remains effectively unopposed.

But Republicans who would like a conservative to win the nomination are having a hard time deciding on a candidate. John Kasich, the candidate who, after Trump, is the least committed to limited constitutional government, took second place in New Hampshire, but he lacks a national organization, discipline, and much appeal to conservatives.

Ted Cruz won an admirable victory over both Trump and the ethanol lobby in Iowa and has shown grace in handling baseless charges of vote-stealing there. His strong support among “very conservative” voters and Evangelical Christians will help him in many states, but he needs a broader base of support to win the nomination.

Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio each have their merits, but neither of them has cracked the top two yet. Both have something to prove now. After a performance at the last debate that even he now admits was disappointing, Rubio has to show that he can come back from adversity: that he is a man of real substance, not just a pretty face. Bush, meanwhile, has to show that his campaign is about more than fundraising and endorsements, even with policy papers in the background. His diffidence, his ambivalence about leading today’s Republicans, his tendency to gaffes: All of them have to be buried. And both Rubio and Bush should embrace a more realistic view of immigration. They ought to make it absolutely clear that the law will be effectively enforced, and the illegal population measurably declining, before any consideration of an amnesty.

As for the rest of us, who vote and watch: We should settle in for a protracted struggle.







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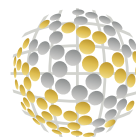
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Text



# The Right Ascendant

*Take a moment to appreciate conservative achievements*

BY CHARLES C. W. COOKE

**W**E'RE a funny bunch on the right, prone inexorably to depression and eschatology. Since the Democratic sweeps of 2006 and 2008 launched a thousand Leftnik cries of "At long last, conservatism is dead," we have been engaged in one of the great political rebuilding projects in American history. In the space of just ten years, Republicans and their backers have managed to clamp an iron jaw upon the House of Representatives and retake a majority in the Senate; to win and keep the lion's share of statehouses and governor's mansions; and, most crucial, to move away from George W. Bush's disastrous "compassionate conservatism" toward a more classical, philosophically coherent offering. If, as seems eminently possible, a man with a gleaming "R" next to his name is inaugurated next January 20, the Right will be given its first chance at meaningful reform in over a decade—and, this time, with an anti-cronyist Tea Party hooked up to the circuits. Yet in spite of all of these achievements—and with less than a year to go before our chance to complete the refurbishment is upon us—many of us are beginning to sound like Reg.

Reg, for those who are unfamiliar with *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, is a fictional Judean rabble-rouser who loathes the Roman Empire and seeks to undermine it at every turn. Unable to see the advances that have been made around him, Reg takes to asking rhetorical questions that, in the grand scheme of things, are both extraordinarily myopic and politically ill advised. "What," he inquires indignantly at one of his insurrectionist meetings, "have the Romans ever done for *us*?" To which the truculent crowd responds predictably: *An awful lot.* "All right!" Reg eventually concedes with irritation, "but apart from the sanitation, medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, the fresh-water system, and public health . . . what have the Romans ever done for us?"

The answer to this absurd question, delivered as the coup de grâce: "The aqueducts?"

I am reminded of this scene a great deal at present. Consider, if you will, how often disenchanted conservatives propose in earnest that "conservatism hasn't conserved anything"—and, by extension, that the Republican party has failed to represent anything more than "Democrat lite." Consider, too, how readily right-leaning

voters express a peculiarly Paineian desire to "burn it all down and start again." Prior to the Iowa caucuses, the *Daily Caller's* Tucker Carlson joined a growing chorus of such voices, submitting that Donald Trump was doing so well in the polls because conservatism had "failed" and needed to be replaced. This assessment was broadly praised, especially by those who have become convinced that Republicans and their ideological allies are all but collaborating with the enemy. Unspoken, but everywhere implied, was a modest variation on Reg's infamous query: "What has conservatism ever done for us?"

When confronted by this challenge, one is tempted to list the monumental ideological victories that the Right has won over the past 40 years. And rightly so. Since Ronald Reagan made his first serious presidential run, in 1976, conservatism has produced a cornucopia of significant changes—not only to government policy, but to the baseline presumptions of American life. Among these alterations are the tarring and feathering of the reflexively technocratic mindset that obtained from the outset of the New Deal to the end of the 1970s; the marginalization of wage and price controls, and of other centralizing tools; the lowering of destructive tax rates on income and other forms of wealth; the deregulation of a significant number of major industries; a renewed focus on national sovereignty; the successful reform of the welfare system; a consensus around free trade; a much lower minimum wage; a focus on both the text and the original meaning of the Constitution when discussing limits on government power; the restoration of the right to keep and bear arms; the stronger protection of freedom of expression; a national partial-birth-abortion ban; the death of speech-killing "campaign-finance reform"; and, lest we forget, the peaceful dismantling of the Soviet Union. For some much-needed context, understand that the GOP's standard-bearer in the early 1970s, Richard Nixon, was the mind behind the Environmental Protection Agency, whereas today's Republican candidates are opposed to so many departments that they can't always remember all of their names.

But I will not dwell on the past. Instead, I will argue that we need not look so far back to answer the charge. Rather, we can contemplate the past decade with some considerable pride. Because con-



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# Our Last Emperor

*Toward a bipartisan compromise to rein in executive power*

BY OREN CASS

OUR system of government does little to prevent a strongman or a crank from winning the presidency. As long as Electoral College members adhere faithfully to the election results in their states, voters may choose whomever they want, on whatever basis. Recognizing this, the Constitution's framers tightly circumscribed the president's role, checking it horizontally with coequal branches that resist sudden change and vertically with the many powers reserved to the states.

Throughout American history, no shortage of questionable characters has run for, seriously contested, and even attained the presidency. Yet as the unfolding 2016 campaign has brought fresh reminders of democracy's unpredictability, the governing class has panicked, directing outrage and disdain at absurd candidates and their seemingly irrational supporters and mourning the impending collapse of the republic. The panic is understandable, but the blame badly misplaced.

The dangerous and novel phenomenon of 2016 is not irresponsible politicians or an inflamed electorate, but rather the unprecedented concentration of power awaiting the election's ultimate winner. Ironically, many of the now-panicking elites are the very ones who made the presidency so powerful. If they can learn the right lesson from the recent chaos, the specter—even fleeting—of a President Trump or a President Sanders could provide the needed spur to restore balance to our constitutional system.

Both parties have done their best to expand the power of the presidency in recent decades—whenever the presidency was theirs. Presidents Reagan and then Clinton established unprecedented White House control over the sprawl of federal agencies. The second President Bush asserted nearly exclusive authority to

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servatives aim to repeal so much of the damage done by progressivism of late, we can at times feel hopeless—and even angry. In theory, we understand that the people backed Obama twice and that his veto stands proudly in the way of our getting to reverse his excesses; in practice, however, it can be tempting to assume that the lack of major progress has been the product of quiet acquiescence or tactical incompetence—or, worst of all, of deep-seated corruption.

That, I'd venture, is a mistake. Not only have the vast majority of the stands that have been taken against Obama been futile from the outset (the president really isn't going to sign a repeal of his major achievements, and the public really isn't going to force him to do so at the point of a shutdown), but to focus on their failure is rather to miss the point, which is that the Right's consistent willingness to block progressive change before it can be put into law has kept a parade of horrors from ever intruding upon the scene. Had the conservative movement not held the line since 2008, Americans would have seen the quick death of the Bush tax cuts; the introduction of a growth-stifling cap-and-trade regime on carbon dioxide emissions; sweeping gun control, including both an "assault weapons" ban and a federal firearms registry; the provision of a "public option" within Obamacare, if not a move toward full-blown single-payer; the false promise of "free" college; union "card check"; an unabashed de facto amnesty for illegal immigrants; wildly increased legal-immigration levels, with an emphasis on importing the unskilled; a host of religious-liberty violations, with no Religious Freedom Restoration Act to counteract them; and overall spending levels that would make today's look modest.

Elsewhere—where no national veto is possible—things would have been dramatically different, too. At the state level, there would have been no marches toward right-to-work or liberalized concealed carry; no progress on school choice or eminent domain; no restrictions on late-term abortion or state-constitution amendments defining marriage; and none of the regulatory and fiscal reforms that are coaxing Americans out of the blue states and onto the red horizon. Despite voting unanimously against the bill, Republicans could not stop Obamacare. But they have managed to prevent Medicaid from being

expanded universally, and they have mostly forced the federal government to own its messy system of insurance exchanges. That was no walk in the park.

And in the courts? Well, without the two judges that George W. Bush appointed to the Supreme Court, we would have had no *Heller*, no *McDonald*, no *Citizens United*, no *Harris*, no *McCullen*, and no *Hobby Lobby*. Moreover, we would have read only two disgusted dissents in both *Windsor* and *Obergefell*, and, backed by a 7–2 cushion, the ruling justices might have been able to establish a more sweeping set of precedents than they did.

In case I have been misunderstood, let me make it explicit: I am by no means submitting that the Right is "pure," that it isn't often feckless and weak, or that it does not need to improve a great deal. Indeed, from both my perspective as a libertarianish semi-apostate and the perspective of the more traditional conservative voter, there is a lot to dislike. For as long as I live, I will never get over John Roberts's saving Obamacare in both *National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius* and *King v. Burwell*, and neither will I fathom why a putatively conservative party elected to resuscitate the Export-Import Bank, to acquiesce to the nominations of Sonia Sotomayor and Loretta Lynch, to go to the brink of supporting a Chuck Schumer-written immigration bill, or to sign off on the 2015 budget. But there is a significant difference between the proposition that many Republicans aren't conservative enough and the proposition that conservatism per se has failed, and to suggest that we have no choice but to immolate the conservative movement strikes me as abject folly. There have been failures, and, yes, sometimes the Republican party is dangerously out of step with a large portion of its voters. But there is also a significant record of both long- and short-term achievements that should not be sniffed at. Unfashionable as it is to admit, the proximate cause of our present discomfort is not Mitch McConnell or Mitt Romney, but Barack Obama and Nancy Pelosi and the people who put them in the position to inflict substantial damage on the country in the first instance.

What has conservatism ever done for us? A great deal, I'd venture, and it would be prudent to see what it can deliver the next time it has a chance—which, if the cards fall in the right order, might be less than twelve months from now. **NR**



manage national security and foreign affairs. President Obama, after campaigning against the Bush administration's excesses, doubled down on most and then applied the same attitude to matters of domestic policy.

Famously, Obama described in 2014 his "pen and phone" strategy for governing alone in his second term. At the 2015 White House Correspondents' Dinner, the president informed the audience that he had "something that rhymes with 'bucket list.' Take executive action on immigration. Bucket. New climate regulations. Bucket, it's the right thing to do."

Under Obama's theory of the office, a president may use an obscure provision from 1970s legislation to overhaul the nation's utility sector and implement a cap-and-trade system for carbon dioxide emissions, even after Congress expressly rejects such an approach. He may use TARP, a program targeted at the national financial system, to make the federal government part-owner of the auto industry, while using other economic-stimulus funds to manipulate states into adopting the Common Core curriculum

standards. He may offer de facto amnesty by refusing to enforce immigration laws.

Hillary Clinton, running to succeed Obama, has already pledged to go even further in declining to enforce immigration laws, and to extend that approach to gun control and financial regulation as well. The reach of the federal government has become all-encompassing, and the president's position in that government dominant.

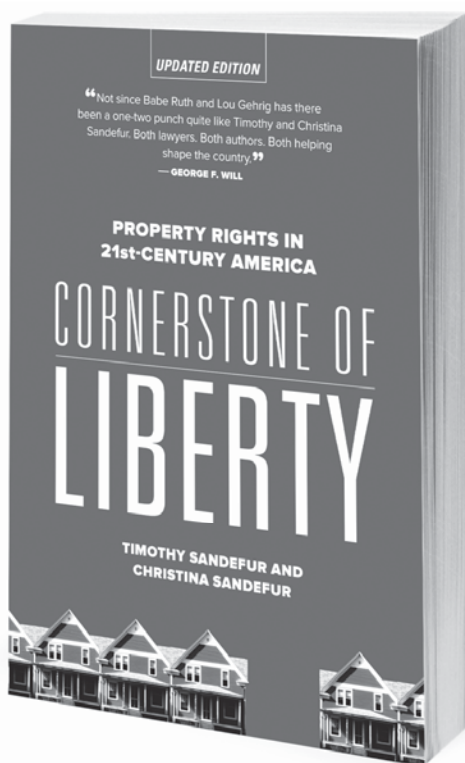
Reversing this trend will not be easy. In the typical pattern, the party out of power objects to expansions of executive authority because it objects to the ends the current president is pursuing. But once it's in power again, the farthest expansions of the prior administration's claims of power become a useful starting point for yet farther expansion in service of a different agenda. The ratchet turns only one way; no one in power ever abandons his own goals for the sake of reimposing limits.

Conservatives argue for restricting executive power to advance the cause of limited government, forgoing short-term

policy gains to establish a preferred long-term structure wherein multiple checks on each actor's power slow the machinery of Washington. But that goal has no chance of receiving bipartisan support. And if conservatives pursue it unilaterally, they handicap only themselves, restricting their own power and thus their policy gains when in charge, only to see the other side leap ahead when given the chance.

Restoring balance to the constitutional system will therefore require that all sides focus on a third and far more important rationale: The president's power should be confined not to what we want any particular executive to have, but to what we would want the worst imaginable president to have. Such thoughts are far from the minds of both governing and governed when a long line of Bushes, Clintons, Gores, Kerrys, McCains, Obamas, and Romneys graces the national stage, and a Vermont governor with a medical practice passes as the "insurgent." But 2016 should provide just the shock the system needs.

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The decisive winner of the Democrats' New Hampshire primary is an avowed socialist who condemns the American financial system as "fraud," promises a "revolution," and includes among his top policy priorities rolling back the First Amendment and prosecuting "climate deniers." The decisive winner of the Republicans' New Hampshire primary is a buffoonish self-parody promising to "bring back a hell of a lot worse than waterboarding" and proudly advocating a religious test for entry into the country. Bizarrely, those two probably face less distrust and disdain than their rivals who won in Iowa.

How quickly the tuxedoed guffawing goes silent at the thought of President Trump's checking items off a "rhymes with bucket" list of his own. That neither he nor Senator Sanders seems likely to become president is beside the point. Their political viability exposes a systemic vulnerability that deserves attention before someone capable of building a majority emerges.

Fortunately, now would seem an opportune moment in Washington as well. President Obama has a seven-plus-year legacy of mostly executive accomplishments that could be wiped away by a Republican successor equipped with comparable powers. Rather than roll the dice on the outcome of the election, mightn't he consider cementing his gains in exchange for compromising with Congress to curb future presidents, even a future President Clinton? The Republican majority in Congress, meanwhile, has never been stronger and cannot possibly relish the prospect of subservience to the whims of a President Clinton, Sanders, Trump, or Cruz.

The opportunity for compromise is greatest when each side fears the realistic prospect of an outcome far worse than what negotiation can achieve. What would a compromise on executive power look like? The top priority should be for Congress to reassert its prerogatives. Any one person can be elected president, but good luck electing 300 people of similar mindset to the House and Senate across multiple election cycles. A number of proposals exist for strengthening legislative control vis-à-vis the executive, with many of the best consolidated in the Article I Project (AIP) launched recently by Senator

Mike Lee (R., Utah) and Representative Jeb Hensarling (R., Texas).

Two ideas motivate the AIP reforms: Congress gets to decide how much money the president may spend, and Congress gets to decide what rules the president's agencies may promulgate. Of course, those principles exist today. But by default, the president can act as he pleases until Congress finds the will to resist. Lee and Hensarling's proposal would establish a new default, hamstringing the president until he secures congressional approval.

AIP's first set of reforms restores the congressional "power of the purse" so that budgets for each agency are deliberated and approved, not shoved through as a single omnibus. The second, related set eliminates the "legislative cliffs"—such as debt-ceiling limits and budget deadlines—that encourage brinkmanship and political blackmail. Planks three and four of the agenda establish congressional control over the number and cost of new rules and veto power over major rules, while limiting the discretion the agencies have to define their own authority.

Other ways of constraining the presidency deserve consideration as well. Congress should reassert its role in foreign policy, replacing the open-ended, post-9/11 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) that has enabled the war on terror for nearly 15 years, with a narrower authorization that defines permissible actions and proscribes further adventures without Congress's express consent. A future president might contest the constitutionality of such limits, but at least his power would be at its "lowest ebb," in the immortal words of Justice Jackson, when he acted in direct conflict with the law.

States also need greater protection from the federal leviathan. So much state revenue must travel first through Washington that even the most rebellious governor often has little choice but to accede to White House demands. Funding streams entangled in conditions and waivers, all of which are implemented at the discretion of executive agencies, should be freed from those constraints. In areas such as education and health care, funds that states rely on should be delivered automatically, regardless of whether a state's policies meet with a

president's approval. Let Congress be the branch to take action if it considers the money poorly spent.

Finally, courts share blame for the current imbalance and have their own role to play in correcting it. Their decades of deference to executive interpretations of the law, combined with their creation of procedural doctrines that preclude challenging the executive at all, have aggrandized the presidency at their own expense and the legislature's. Over the coming months, they might consider which doctrines they would wish looked different in the face of a Trump administration. *United States v. Texas*—the pending challenge to the Obama administration's non-enforcement of immigration law, which the Supreme Court will decide in June—would be an ideal opportunity to clarify some of the limits on what a president may do.

Conservatives should not expect unmitigated victory in limiting presidential power. Hopefully, Americans of every political persuasion are discovering their shared interest in limiting the damage a single person can do. But just as the needed reforms will demand sacrifices from advocates of big government, they will likely require sacrifices from the limited-government side as well.

Fortunately, there is much to offer. Any number of Obama's executive actions could be codified in legislation in return for his support in preventing future abuses. Similarly, conservatives might bring to the table a list of loopholes, waivers, and ambiguities in existing legislation that the next Republican president might be expected to exploit and suggest eliminating them in return for comparable eliminations on the left. Broad constituencies that cut across party lines support reforms in other areas, from the budgeting process to the debt ceiling to oversight of military conflicts.

The long arc of American history has bent inevitably toward bigger government and greater executive power. This harms the conservative project under almost any president, and poses significant risks to all Americans under a truly malicious or incompetent leader. If 2016 creates an awareness that all sides will benefit from President Obama's being the last of the imperial presidents, then there should be scope for meaningful progress. Perhaps it is the one great deal that Candidate Trump can help America make. **NR**



# The House Of Saud and The House Of Badawi

*A wife's struggle for her husband*

BY JAY NORDLINGER

**E**NSAF HAIDAR is playing a familiar role, and it is a very difficult role: wife of a political prisoner, who finds herself in exile, spending her time campaigning for her husband. Trying to keep him alive, trying to win his release. Avital Sharansky did this for nine years. She was, and is, the wife of Natan Sharansky, who was in the Gulag. (His first name was then Anatoly.) In recent years, Geng He, the wife of Gao Zhisheng, the heroic Chinese human-rights lawyer, has had to do it.

Or maybe I should say she has *chosen* to do it? Has risen to it?

Ensaf Haidar lives in Quebec—Sherbrooke, specifically—where the winters are very different from those of her native Saudi Arabia. In January, I asked her some questions. One was about the weather. Quebec's winters are harsh, she said, but “the Canadian people are so warm and welcoming that I can barely feel the cold.” She considers herself very lucky to be in Canada.

She is the wife of Raif Badawi, one of the most famous political prisoners in the world. He is a Saudi liberal, 32 years old. He advocates the most basic human rights—freedom of expression, freedom of conscience. He was imprisoned in 2012.

It was in 2000 that he and Ensaf met. They met “by accident,” as Ensaf says. He was a friend of her brother, and occasionally her brother lent her his phone. One day, she wound up talking to Raif. They liked each other, a lot. They had a lot in common. They thought alike. They could not meet face to face, of course, this being Saudi Arabia. But they talked on the phone every day—for two years.

Now and then, they arranged to catch a glimpse of each other. Theirs was a Romeo and Juliet-style romance, complete with balcony scene: Raif would loft letters up to her.

They never properly met until the day he arrived at her home to ask her hand in marriage. Her family flatly refused—but Raif soon wore them down, with his friendliness, persistence, and charm. He and Ensaf married in 2002. They honeymooned in Syria, which was a haven of liberalism, compared with their own society.

For several years, they enjoyed what Ensaf describes as a normal life. Raif was an entrepreneur, the owner of an English-language school and an information-technology school. The couple had three children, two girls and a boy. Then, in 2008, Raif started a website, Free Saudi Liberals. He wanted a space in which he and his fellow citizens could discuss fundamental issues of concern to them.

I might pause here to mention that Raif's older sister, Samar, is a human-rights advocate as well. She is a story unto herself. She too has been in prison. And

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*Ensaf Haidar holds a photo of her husband, Raif Badawi.*

she is one of the Saudi women who have had the audacity to drive a car.

Raif's website caught the attention of free-thinking people, and, equally, it caught the attention of the authorities. They froze his bank accounts and forbade him to travel. Ensaf's family was alarmed (understandably). They took legal steps to force her to divorce Raif. She would have none of it. As the troublemaker's wife, she received death threats, and eventually she and Raif decided that it was best for her and the children to go abroad. He would join them, they thought, in a couple of months.

First, Ensaf and the children went to Egypt, and then Lebanon. They received their ultimate asylum in Canada.

In 2012, Raif was arrested. Among the charges were "insulting Islam through electronic channels" and "going beyond the realm of obedience." The sentence, finally, was ten years plus a thousand lashes. The lashes were to be administered 50 at a time, every Friday, for 20 weeks.

The first flogging occurred on January 9, 2015. Raif was led to the square outside the Juffali Mosque in Jeddah. Handcuffed and ankle-shackled, he was hit 50 times, as a crowd of hundreds cheered. "Allahu akbar!" they shouted, or, "God is great!"

Later, Ensaf saw this event on a leaked cellphone video. "Every lash killed me," she said.

The 50 lashes the next Friday did not occur. The authorities said that the prisoner's wounds from the first lashes had not healed sufficiently. Ensaf believes that a second lashing would have killed him: Raif is slight of build, and, while in prison, has developed diabetes. The second lashing has been postponed Friday after Friday after Friday. It has not yet occurred.

One reason, almost certainly, is that the first lashing provoked an international outcry. The lashing took place two days after the massacre at *Charlie Hebdo* magazine in Paris. "Je suis Charlie" was a universal slogan. People also picked up "Je suis Raif."

Raif's lawyer was Waleed Abulhair, another human-rights advocate, who was also his brother-in-law—Samar's husband. He founded a human-rights-monitoring organization, and also a salon, where young Saudis could discuss the basic questions. The lawyer himself was arrested in 2014. He was charged with "breaking allegiance with the ruler," among other offenses. They sentenced him to 15 years in prison, to be followed by a 15-year travel ban.

So, this is a family drama, as well as a personal one, and a political one, and an international one. To add to the drama, Samar and Waleed have recently divorced, though Samar continues to campaign for him.

Raif Badawi is a cause célèbre. There have been protests around the world in his behalf, often outside Saudi embassies. Governments have raised his case with the House of Saud. One government, Sweden's, broke its defense relationship with the Saudis (much to the sorrow and consternation of the Swedish defense industry). In the time-honored fashion of dictatorships, the Saudis grouse about "attempts to interfere in our internal affairs."

Their marquee prisoner, Raif, has received many awards, in absentia. Last year, he was given the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, which comes from the European Parliament. His wife, Ensaf, went to pick it up. "Raif is not a criminal," she said. "He is a writer and a free-thinker."

The Saudi government destroyed his writings—his blog posts—but not all of

them: His allies were able to retrieve some of them. They have been put into a book called "1,000 Lashes: Because I Say What I Think." One of the entries is called "No to Building a Mosque in New York City." It deals with the attempt, ultimately unsuccessful, to build an Islamic center at Ground Zero. Badawi thought this would be tremendously offensive to Americans after 9/11. "How open-minded are we going to be if a Christian or a Jewish person attacks us in our very home? Will we build a church or a synagogue for them in the same location as the attack?"

Of course, the Saudis don't permit the building of churches or synagogues regardless.

Ensaf, too, will publish a book soon, another component of her campaign for her husband. Called "The Voice of Freedom," it will tell Raif's story, and hers, and theirs.

I ask what her days are like. "Hard," she says. "There are no words to describe how difficult it is to wait, just to wait without knowing what will happen." Her biggest fear is that Raif will be tried for apostasy—the penalty for which is death, usually by beheading.

She does her best to remain calm, if only for the sake of her three children. The boy, exhibiting the assimilation of the very young, has become a rabid hockey fan. He plays the sport with his friends, and they root like mad for the Montreal Canadiens.

For a long time, Ensaf had weekly phone calls with her husband—terribly brief, but regular. She has not been able to speak with him since December 11. She believes that his condition is very poor. He needed medical care, and asked for it. When he was denied it, he went on hunger strike, to get it. Instead of giving him medical care, they moved him into solitary confinement.

As if the couple didn't have enough trouble, both their families have disowned them. Their parents don't want the three children to grow up abroad. They are worried they won't become good Muslims. Raif's father has appeared on Saudi television, to denounce his son. This must buy him some space in Saudi society. Shame falls on everyone associated with a dissenter. (So should glory.)

About the Saudi government, Ensaf does not want to say anything right now. Any word, apparently, might be harmful. She does want to talk about her adoptive country, for which she's so



grateful: “Canada has made me feel that I matter as a human being.”

Her main hope is that “free societies will pressure the Saudi government to release Raif.” The United States would be especially helpful here. Saudi Arabia is our ally, and necessarily so. But we citizens should not be blind to the fact that, really, this is a ghastly dictatorship, imprisoning and torturing some of the very best of that country.

For years, many of us have hoped for the appearance of Sharanskys, Sakharovs, and Solzhenitsyns on the Arab scene. They exist, obviously. They may not be world-class scientists or writers, but they certainly exist, and they are very brave.

Ensaf Haidar is brave too. She says that it is “normal” to defend one’s husband. But some people can’t rise even to normality. Raif and Ensaf are an extraordinary love story, kindred spirits—two people who found each other in a desert, in more than one sense. Ensaf thinks they are destined for each other.

And I will close with a humble fact, which I think says a lot: If Ensaf filed her taxes as a single parent, it would be to her advantage. But she insists on filing as married: because she is. **NR**

# Barbie Proliferates

*The doll now comes in a variety of shapes and sizes, but not everyone is pleased*

BY HEATHER WILHELM

**L**IKE many Americans, I have long dreamed of a better world, one in which I would no longer be oppressed by inanimate plastic fashion dolls. On January 28, the Mattel toy company finally delivered. Barbie, that perennially foxy but quietly sinister supermodel-shaped plaything, will make us all feel better by gaining a few extra pounds.

Launched amid great fanfare and a *Time* cover story—“Now can we stop talking about my body?”—the new and improved Barbie has added three “realistic” body-shape options (“petite,” “tall,” and

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“curvy”), 24 different hair styles, 30 different hair colors, 22 eye colors, 14 face shapes, and seven additional skin tones.

The goal, as one Mattel executive announced to the world, was to “represent a line that is more reflective of the world girls see around them—the variety in body type, skin tones, and style allows girls to find a doll that speaks to them.”

This is all fine and good, really. Who but the most cold-hearted of souls could shake their fist at a more diverse collection of still unbelievably unrealistic dolls with perfectly symmetrical faces? The bulk of Barbie’s updates, in fact—hair, eyes, and skin—were largely met with a fond and appreciative nod. But it was Barbie’s increased caloric-storage capacity that truly rocked the world, inspiring wall-to-wall news coverage, widespread wringing of hands, and about 700 of the most absurd and hilarious think pieces one might ever hope to read.

“When I look into the still vacuous eyes of the new ‘fat’ Barbie,” wrote Mona Awad at *Time*,

I see that Barbie can’t escape herself either, regardless of changes made to her height, waist, hips and skin tone. . . . Barbie

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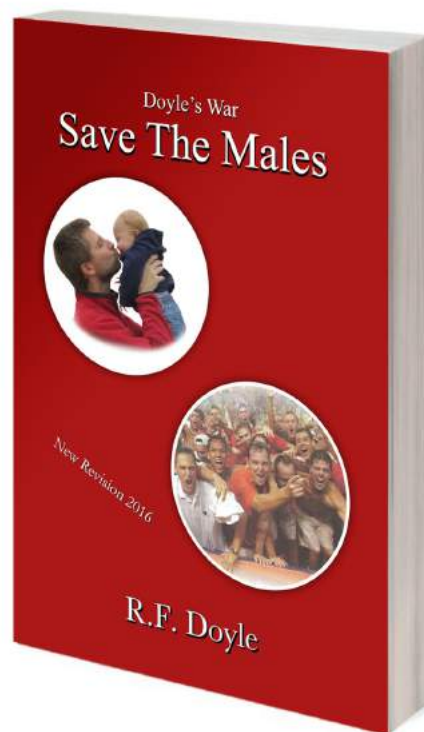
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The axiom that women are more discriminated against than men in Western society is a hoax promoted by mod/lib/fems. The ongoing war against men is harmful to all of humanity. The “war between the sexes” needn’t be fought nor lost by anyone, but must be taken seriously. This book disparages the all-too-common idea that males cannot and should not do “fathering.” Men’s sorry situation results largely from a combination of misplaced chivalry (or a perversion of it) and misandry, a near universal zeitgeist. These are elephants in the room nobody notices, or pretends not to. These ideological blinders, the metastasizing of feminism, and other fiascos, have severely damaged society.



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cannot transcend what she is composed of—not molded plastic, but rather the anxieties, desires, and dreams of her makers, which invite a kind of impossible happily-ever-after narrative, narrow and eerily dreamy and irresistible at the same time.

Ah, yes, how true. Except the added pounds, tragically, are not real; they are plastic and illusory. I'll take this moment to remind us all that we are talking about a children's doll originally based on an inappropriate German bachelor-party gift; a doll that, until recent years, would have toppled over like one of those Potemkin Chinese skyscrapers if she had been magically transformed into a real live human being, because her feet were perennially frozen into a freaky, sky-high tiptoe.

Oh, and as for *Time*'s innocent question—"Now can we stop talking about my body?"—the answer is a clear, decided no. At *Bustle*, a website "by and for women," one anxiety-ridden author applauded a tweet calling for a "trans Barbie," then added:

where is fat Barbie? Where is pear-shaped Barbie? Where is blind Barbie? Where is disabled Barbie? I'm not asking for an "ugly" Barbie—although that would be interesting—but for Mattel to find beauty in different bodies outside of a slim, cisgendered, able-bodied standard of beauty.

Well, just give them time. Barbie, at least according to its spokespeople, was responding to perceived visions of subtle oppression, largely due to the perpetuation of impossible beauty standards. "We were seeing that Millennials are driven by social justice and attracted to brands with purpose and values," Tania Missad,

Mattel's director of global brand insights, told the U.K.'s *Telegraph*, "and they didn't see Barbie in this category."

This is all very high-minded, and also hilarious, given that Barbie's rebranding panic attack was likely inspired at least in part by the rising success of a competitor: Queen Elsa, from the movie *Frozen*, a beloved Disney character-turned-doll who has knocked Barbie off her pedestal in recent years. Elsa, it should be noted, is not exactly a social-justice warrior, but rather a slender, buxom, blonde hermit in a slinky dress who accidentally freezes her victims in between mental breakdowns. Incidentally, Lego, another top Barbie competitor, has upped sales by making mini-figures and other products that are more stereotypically "girly"—endless pinkness, build-your-own beauty shops, and stifling trips to floral-hued, brick-based malls.

Other dolls, such as American Girl and Madame Alexander, have thrived by offering more "realistic," less sexy body types. As a friend of mine with three little girls wryly noted, "Mattel is a little late to the body-positivity party." Indeed. But when it comes to Barbie, isn't that the whole point? Isn't Barbie supposed to be sexy (in 2003, after all, she was banned by Saudi Arabia's Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice), over-the-top, and unrealistic?

I played with Barbies as a kid, and also Legos—back when they were proudly unisex—as well as Star Wars action figures, multiracial Cabbage Patch Kids, and, at one rather weird point, a creepy, old-fashioned, flap-jawed ventriloquist doll named Dexter. None of these playthings

troubled me by being "unrealistic" or "unrepresentative," just as none of my brother's muscled G.I. Joe or Superman toys sent him into a grade-school shame spiral. This was probably because they were toys.

Do girls look at Barbie and decide to starve themselves? Given that we have a national obesity epidemic rather than a crazed Amazonian supermodel epidemic, I'd lean towards no. A 2009 study from Rutgers University titled "Barbie at 50: Maligned but Benign?" argued that "neither age of acquisition [n]or number of Barbies owned had a significant impact on self-evaluations of appearance or on dieting behavior. The strongest predictor of dieting behavior was the wom[a]n's recollection of how much physical appearance was valued by her family of origin members."

Further, when we dig deeper, it seems that no one has a problem with toys' being "unrealistic." Feminists adore the unreal when it's carrying their preferred narrative. Take the latest Star Wars film, *The Force Awakens*. Its heroine, Rey, is a tough-as-nails fighter who can take down six stormtroopers in approximately three seconds without breaking a sweat. She also appears to have the body-mass index of a twelve-year-old. I like Rey as much as you do, but I'm sorry, this is not realistic (and I know that Rey secretly harbors the Force, which probably gives her superhuman strength, but the Force, alas, is also not real).

In the end, what can we make of the new, slightly heftier Barbie, a doll that still, despite its seismic changes, likely falls into the top 1 percent of the attractiveness bracket? "I think that this is bigger than Barbie's shape," Kelli Harding, assistant professor of psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center, told the *New York Times*, "because this really gets at gender inequality in the United States as well."

Really? From my view, the great American Barbie brouhaha implies that girls are fragile flowers, constantly on the verge of a breakdown. You certainly don't see this angst surrounding boys. Perhaps, in the end, we're left with a failure of imagination—or, on a more basic level, an urge to tackle small things, such as toys, that are easy to control.

Sometimes a doll is just a doll. Unfortunately, and somewhat amusingly, many of our friends on the left simply cannot let this be. **NR**





Text

# From Oxy to Overdose

*How prescription-drug abuse unleashed a heroin epidemic*

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

*Birmingham, Ala.*

**‘D**OGFOOD—yeah, *dogfood*—because it looks like ground-up dogfood.” He is embarrassed to be talking about this. “Or sand, because it’s brown. Or diesel. Or killa or 911. That’s the influence of rap culture down here.” Young, clean-cut, Eagle Scout-ish white kid, hesitant about using the words “rap culture.” But he goes on, matter-of-factly. He’s been off heroin for only a few months, so the details are fresh in his mind, even if he remains a little hazy on some of his autobiographical timeline. “The 911, they call it that because they want you to know it’s potent, that you’ll have to go to the emergency room.”

That’s a weird and perverse and nasty kind of advertising, but then dope-buying psychology isn’t very much like Volvo-buying psychology: Crashing is just another part of the ride. One spiteful dealer boasts about spiking his product with excessive amounts of fentanyl, an all-business pharmaceutical analgesic used for burn victims and cancer patients, that particular entrepreneur’s plan being to intentionally send overdosed users to the hospital or the morgue . . . for marketing purposes. Once the word got out about the hideous strength of his product, that killa went right out the door ricky-tick.

The young man explaining the current vocabulary of opiate addiction in Birmingham is barely old enough to buy a beer,

and his face and voice are soft. He describes the past several years of his life: “dope-sick and stealing,” going from job to job—eight jobs in six months—and robbing his employers blind, alienating his family, descending. He was an addict on a mission: “You’re always chasing that first shot of dope, that first high—and the first one for me almost killed me. I was 17 or 18 years old, and I met a guy who had just got out of prison, doing a 13-year sentence for heroin possession and distribution. He was staying at the Oak Mountain Lodge, which is a nice little classic place.” (In 2013, four police officers and a drug dog had to be treated for exposure to dangerous chemicals after raiding a suspected meth lab in that hotel; the customer reviews online are decidedly mixed.) “I was *snorting* heroin when I met up with him, and set him up with my connect. He offered to shoot me up, and I wanted to do it. And I remember him looking me in the eyes and telling me, ‘If you do this, you’ll never stop, and you’ll never go back.’ And I said, ‘LET’S DO IT.’”

He doesn’t know what happened for the next several hours. When he regained consciousness, his junkie buddy’s girlfriend was worriedly ministering to him.

“That was first thing in the morning,” he says. “That night, I did another one.”

Same results. “I’d nodded out from snorting it, but there’s nothing like shooting it.”

He was, for a time, a “pretty good junkie.”

**T**HIS particular opiate odyssey starts off in a Walgreens, which turns out to be absolutely appropriate. I’m headed up the south coast and then inland on the heroin highway up to Atlanta, starting from the Port of Houston, which connects that city with 1,053 ports in nearly 200 countries and which in December alone welcomed the equivalent of 63,658 20-foot cargo containers of goods into the United States. There was, the feds are pretty sure, some dope squirreled away in there, and in fact all sorts of interesting stuff comes in and out: In May, U.S. Customs seized a Fast Attack Vehicle with gun mounts, headed to the Netherlands. I’ve got a long drive ahead and I’m going to be out of pocket for a bit, and I have a prescription to fill: a Schedule II Controlled Substance, in the official nomenclature, which covers some pretty interesting stuff, including the oxycodone and fentanyl I’ll be hearing so much about in the next few days. Some of us are going to heaven, some of us are going to hell, but all of us have to stop at Walgreens first.

The clerk is on the phone with a doctor’s office: “What’s your DEA number?”

For working-class white guys who haven’t found their way into those good jobs in the energy economy or the related manufacturing and construction booms that have reverberated throughout the oil patch, who aren’t college-bound or in possession of the skills to pay the bills, things aren’t looking so great: While much of the rest of the world gets healthier and longer-lived, the average life expectancy for white American men without college educations is declining. Angus Deaton, the Princeton economist who recently won the Nobel prize, ran the numbers and found (in a study coauthored by his Princeton colleague Anne Case) that what’s killing what used to be the white working class isn’t diabetes or heart disease or the consumption of fatty foods and Big Gulps that so terrifies Michael Bloomberg, but alcohol-induced liver failure, along with overdoses of opioid prescription painkillers and heroin: Wild Turkey and hillbilly heroin and regular-old heroin, too, the use of which has increased dramatically in recent years as medical and law-enforcement authorities crack down on the wanton overprescription of oxy and related painkillers.

Which is to say: While we were *ignoring* criminally negligent painkiller prescriptions, we helped create a gigantic population of opioid addicts, and then, when we started paying attention, first thing we did was take away the legal (and quasi-legal) stuff produced to exacting clinical standards by Purdue Pharma (maker of OxyContin) et al. So: lots of opiate addicts, fewer prescription opiates.

What was left was diesel, sand—*dogfood*.

The clerks at this Walgreens are super friendly, but the place is set up security-wise like a bank, and that’s to be expected. This particular location was knocked over by a young white man with a gun the summer before last, an addict who had been seen earlier lurking around the CVS down the road. This is how you know you’re a pretty good junkie: The robber walked in and pointed his automatic at the clerk and demanded oxy first, then a bottle of Tusinex cough syrup, and then, almost as an afterthought, the \$90 in the till. Walgreens gets robbed a lot: In January, armed men

stormed the Walgreens in Edina, Minn., and made off with \$8,000 worth of drugs, mainly oxy. In October, a sneaky young white kid in an Iowa State shirt made off with more than \$100,000 worth of drugs, again, mainly oxy and related opioid painkillers, from a Walgreens in St. Petersburg, Fla. Other Walgreens locations—Liberty, Kan., Virginia Beach, Va., East Bradford, Pa., Elk Grove, Calif., Kaysville, Utah, New Orleans—all have been hit by armed robbers or sneak thieves over the past year or so, and there have been many more oxy thefts.

It won’t make the terrified clerks feel any better, but there’s a little bit of poetic justice in that: In 2013, Walgreens paid the second-largest fine ever imposed under the Controlled Substances Act for being so loosey-goosey in handling oxy at its distribution center in Jupiter, Fla., that it enabled untold quantities of the stuff to reach the black market. The typical pharmacy sells 73,000 oxycodone pills a year; six Walgreens in Florida were going through more than 1 million pills a year—each. A few years before that, Purdue was fined \$634.5 million for misleading the public about the addictiveness of oxycodone. Kentucky, which has been absolutely ravaged by opiate addiction, is still pursuing litigation against Purdue, and it has threatened to take its case all the way to the Supreme Court, if it comes to that.

Ground Zero in the opiate epidemic isn’t in some exotic Taliban-managed poppy field or some cartel boss’s fortified compound: It’s right there at Walgreens, in the middle of every city and town in the country.

I pick up my prescription and get on my way.

The next afternoon, having driven past billboards advertising boudin and strip joints with early-bird lunch specials and casino after casino after sad little casino, HELP WANTED signs for drilling-fluid businesses and the Tiger Truck Stop (which has a 24-hour Cajun café and an actual no-kidding *live tiger* in a cage out front), past Whiskey Bay and Contraband Bayou, where the pirate Jean Lafitte once stashed his booty, around the Port of New Orleans, another entrepôt for heroin and cocaine—it is almost as close to Cartagena as it is to New York—I arrive at a reasonably infamous New Orleans drug corner, where I inquire as discreetly as I can about the availability of prescription painkillers, which are getting harder and harder to find on the street.

This particular area was until recently under the control of an energetic fellow called “Dumplin,” who, judging from his police photos, isn’t nearly so cute and approachable as that nickname would suggest. Dumplin ran a gang called 3NG, which presumably stands for “Third and Galvez,” the nearby intersection that constituted the center of his business empire. In March, Dumplin went away on three manslaughter charges and a raft of drug-conspiracy complaints. No Dumplin, but the opiate trade doesn’t seem to have noticed. Little teams of two or three loiter in residential doorways, and business gets done. Who is running the show now? Somebody knows.

Everybody has heroin, but asking about oxy is greeted as a breach of protocol by my not especially friendly neighborhood drug dealer, who doesn’t strike me as the kind of guy who suffers breaches of protocol lightly. He looks at me with exactly the sort of contempt one would expect from a captain of an industry that uses lethal overdoses as a marketing gimmick.

“This ain’t Walgreens, motherf\*\*\*er.”



‘W E partner with Walgreens.’

If Dr. Peter DeBlieux sometimes sounds as if he’s seen it all, it’s possible that he has. As his name suggests, he’s a New Orleans local, and he’s been practicing medicine in the city long enough to have seen earlier heroin epidemics. Now the chief medical officer and medical-staff president at University Medical Center, he speaks with some authority on how changes in global heroin logistics affect conditions in his emergency rooms, which have just seen a 250 percent spike in opiate-overdose cases in one month.

“The first time we’d seen these numbers is when the heroin supply chain moved from the Orient to South America. Before that, New Orleans’s supply traditionally came with everybody else’s supply, from the Far East through New York, and then down to us. By the time it got to New Orleans, it was adulterated, much less pure. But then competitors from South America began bringing heroin along the same routes used to import cocaine. They brought a purer product, which meant more overdoses requiring rescue.” That was in the late 1980s and early 1990s, right around the time when our self-appointed media scolds were bewailing the “heroin chic” in Calvin Klein fashion shoots and celebrity junkie Kurt Cobain was nodding off during publicity events.

The current spike in overdoses is related to a couple of things. One proximate cause is the increased use of fentanyl to spike heroin. Heroin, like Johnnie Walker, is a blend: The raw stuff is cut with fillers to increase the volume, and then that diluted product is spiked with other drugs to mask the effects of dilution. Enter the fentanyl. Somebody, somewhere, has got his hands on a large supply of the stuff, either hijacked from legitimate pharmaceutical manufacturers or produced in some narco black site in Latin America for the express purpose of turbocharging heroin. (Where did it come from? Somebody knows.) Fentanyl, on its own, isn’t worth very much on the street: It might get you numb, but it really doesn’t get you high, and such pleasures as are to be derived from its recreational use are powerfully offset by its tendency to kill you dead. But if the blend is artfully done, then fentanyl can make stepped-on heroin feel more potent than it is. If the blend isn’t right . . . medical personnel are known to refer to that as a “clean kill.”

New Orleans has taken some steps to try to get ahead of this mess. One of the things that the city’s health providers had been experimenting with was giving addicts and their families prescriptions for naloxone, sold under the brand name Narcan, which is the anti-intoxicant used to reverse the effects of opiates in people who have overdosed. Put another way: The best clinical thinking at the moment—the top idea among our best and brightest white-coated elite—is to help *un*ies *re*an their *o*verdoses. If that’s shocking and depressing, what’s more shocking and depressing is that it really is needful. Essential, even. A few other cities have experimented with it, too, and not long after my conversation with Dr. DeBlieux, New Orleans’s top health officials handed down an emergency order to make Narcan available over the counter. Jeffrey Elder, the city’s director of emergency medical services, said that with the New Orleans emergency rooms seeing as many as ten opiate overdoses a day, the step was necessary. Dr. DeBlieux’s emergency rooms saw seven overdose deaths in January alone.

In high places, there are stirrings of awareness about heroin’s most recent ferocious comeback, but it has taken a while. Congress held hearings, and Senator Kelly Ayotte, the charismatic

young New Hampshire Republican, introduced the Heroin and Prescription Opioid Abuse Prevention, Education, and Enforcement Act of 2015, currently on ice in the Judiciary Committee. That bill would . . . convene a task force.

Dr. DeBlieux compares the public perception of heroin to the public perception of AIDS (the issues are not entirely unrelated) a generation ago: It is seen as a problem for deviants. AIDS was for perverts who liked to have anonymous sex with men at highway rest stops, and heroin is a problem for toothless pillbillies who turn to the needle after running out of oxy and for whores and convicts and menacing black men in New Orleans ghettos. Heroin, this line of thinking goes, is a problem for people who deserve it.

“Nobody cares, because of who is affected,” Dr. DeBlieux says, or at least the perception of who is affected. “There are two problems with that. One, it’s unethical. Two, it isn’t true.” It isn’t just the born-to-lose crowd and career criminals and deviants and undesirables. It’s working-class white men and college-bound suburban kids, too.

Dr. DeBlieux and his colleagues are doing what they can to minimize the damage. University Medical Center distributes that Narcan through a private embedded pharmacy in the hospital, operated by—you won’t be surprised—Walgreens.

O DYSEY HOUSE is not a happy place. It’s a necessary place.

I arrive too early for my appointment, so I have a look around the neighborhood. It is downscale, and there definitely is a little bit of unlicensed pharmaceutical trade being transacted nearby, but it’s far from the worst I’ve seen in New Orleans. I decide to go pick up some extra notebooks, and I end up—inevitably—at Walgreens. There are 8,173 Walgreens locations filling 894 million prescriptions a year, and that big ol’ record-book fine doesn’t look too big up against \$77 billion in sales a year. CVS does \$140 billion a year, filling one-third of all U.S. pharmaceutical prescriptions. In a country of 319 million, there



were 259 million opiate-painkiller prescriptions written last year. There were 47,000 lethal overdoses in the U.S. in 2014, almost 30,000 of which were prescription painkillers and heroin. Some 94 percent of heroin users told researchers that they got into heroin because the pills they started on became too expensive or too difficult to find, whereas heroin is cheap and plentiful. How do we keep up with all those pills? Where do they go? Somebody knows. It's been only two weeks since there was an armed robbery of a Walgreens in New Orleans, but it wasn't this one. That one is about 20 minutes away.

I park my car on the street across from Odyssey House, down the block from a sign advertising free HIV screening, and an older white man comes out of his home to stand on the porch, staring at me. He's still there, still staring, when I go inside the building across the street. Odyssey House is the largest addiction-treatment facility in Louisiana, treating about 700 people a month, about half of them from greater New Orleans. It was founded in response to New Orleans's first major heroin epidemic, some 45 years ago. Its clients are about half white in a city that isn't, and predominantly male. About half of its clients are there on court orders, and the other half have simply decided that they want to live. Its CEO, Ed Carlson, has a master's in clinical psychology and not much in the way of kind words for Louisiana's former governor, conservative health-policy wonk Bobby Jindal. It's partly a familiar complaint—Jindal's rejection of the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act means that about 90 percent of Odyssey House's patients have to be covered by general state funds, which are scarce. But it's also an illustration of one of the hidden costs of privatizing public-health services: the transfer of administrative costs from state agencies onto third parties, including nonprofits such as Odyssey House.

"Under the privatization of the Bayou Health plans," Carlson says, "it's like this: I have a guy who shows up, who's a heroin addict, who's been in and out of the criminal-justice system, maybe a 20-year heroin addict, maybe semi-homeless, and he wants to get off heroin in our detox. And I have to spend an hour explaining to [insurance bureaucrats] why this guy needs treatment, usually with someone who doesn't understand treatment at all." That meant hiring more administrative help. "What it did was, it shot up our costs. Now we have people who all they do all day long is sit down and try to convince somebody that this person needs treatment. And they'll say, 'Has he tried outpatient?' He's a heroin addict. He's homeless. He's here at our door. I don't have a problem justifying to them that a person needs services, but, once we've justified it, then let's go with the level of services that a medical professional recommends."

Outpatient treatment? Heroin addicts as a class don't have a real good record for keeping appointments.

Odyssey's program is intensive: It begins with a medically supported detox program, which isn't all that critical for opiate addicts (the popular image of the effects of heroin withdrawal are theatrically exaggerated, as Theodore Dalrymple documented in his classic on the subject, *Romancing the Opiates*) but which is absolutely necessary for alcohol withdrawal, which can be fatal. The reality is that most heroin addicts drink their fair share, too. Detox is followed by a 28-day residential program, followed by housing support and an outpatient program. Odyssey has primary-care physicians and psychiatrists on staff, a separate residential program for adolescents, and more. They aren't promiscuous with the money—for example, they don't send methampheta-

mine addicts to detox, because their withdrawal lasts only a few hours and its main effects are discomfort and a few days of insomnia—but, even so, all this treatment gets expensive, and the city of New Orleans kicks in the princely sum of \$0.00 in municipal money for these services, with the exception of some pass-through money from state and federal agencies.

The general consensus is that this sort of treatment provides the best chance for helping some—fewer than you'd think—of the chronically addicted, homeless and semi-homeless, destitute, low-bottom population. There's no cheap way to do it. "There's really only two things we know, from a scientific standpoint, about addiction," Carlson says. "The first thing we know is that when a person has a problem with addiction and they have that moment, that break in the wall of denial—if they can access treatment at that point, then they're more likely to engage in the treatment process and to be more serious about it. The other thing we know is that the longer we keep people in treatment, the longer they're going to stay clean and sober."

In total, it costs just under \$1 million a month to run Odyssey House and provide those services to its 700 or so patients. And what do the funding agencies get for that money? A one-year success rate of a little more than 50 percent—which is significantly better than that of most comparable programs. Beyond that one year? No one really knows. "The fact is that most people who need addiction treatment don't really want it," Carlson says.

It isn't clear that there really is a solution to the opiate epidemic, but if there is, there's one thing you can be sure of: It is going to cost a great deal of money. "We have waiting lists for all our programs," Carlson says with a slight grimace. "We could probably double in size and still have waiting lists."

HOMELESSNESS in New Orleans isn't the only model of heroin addiction, or even the most prevalent one. Up in the land of Whole Foods and Starbucks and yoga studios in one of the nicer parts of Birmingham, it looks like a different world. But it isn't. More white people, more Volvos—same junkies.

Danny Malloy doesn't sound like he belongs here. He has a heavy Boston accent, and he still shakes his head at some aspects of life in the South: "We measure snow in feet up there, but it's inches down here," he scoffs. There's a little snow blowing around, and a few streaks of white on the grass. "No plows, no salt trucks, and nobody knows how to drive in it." He ended up in Alabama the way people end up places. His parents were divorced when he was very young, his alcoholic father eventually sent him to live with an aunt, and he later sought out his estranged mother in Birmingham. "I didn't know her," he says. He was already a blackout drunk and had found his way to the pills, which he was both consuming and dealing.

"I never realized I had a problem. I thought I was having a good time. I got into prescription pills. I really liked them—I mean like *reall* liked them. It took probably three years of me dabbling in those before I was fully addicted, and every day I had to have Lortabs. I got into OxyContin and was selling those. I got set up by someone and sold to an undercover police officer. So I was arrested for distribution, and I was facing time. At that point, someone came along and said, 'These pills are expensive, and you can't sell them any more. So why don't you do heroin?' I said I would never do that. I don't want to use a needle. But, eventu-



ally, like a good drug addict, I was like, 'Let me try that.' The rest was history. I've been to 15 or 20 rehabs, including psychiatric hospitals, arrests, detoxes, methadone rehabs. I couldn't get rid of it. I did that for about seven years. Things got . . . really bad." He'd been a college student, majoring in "whatever started at noon," but he ended up being kicked out. "The first time I ever thought maybe I had a problem was when I got arrested and my face was down in a puddle with a cop on my back. That's what it took." Eventually, he put himself on a Greyhound and checked into the Foundry, a Christian rehab facility. "I never looked back. I turned my life over to God, and He took away the desire to use." He pauses as if reconsidering what he's said. "It isn't magic."

Alabama doctors write more opiate prescriptions per capita than those of any other state. And where there is oxy, there will be dogfood. "The pills lead to heroin," Malloy says. "You see these doctors getting arrested for running a pill mill. Well, they have hundreds of people they're prescribing to, and when they tighten down on that, the next thing is the heroin."

Far from being an inner-city problem and a poor-white problem, heroin is if anything more prevalent in some of the wealthier areas around Birmingham, says Drew Callner, another recovering addict and a volunteer at the Addiction Prevention Coalition

spoon for a filter, pull the heroin solution up through the cotton into the syringe, find a vein—this isn't always easy, and it gets harder—work the needle in, pull the plunger back . . .

And then, you see it: the red flag, a little flash of blood that gets pulled into the syringe and lets you know that you have found a vein, that you aren't about to waste your junk on an intramuscular injection that isn't going to do anything except burn and waste your money and disappoint you and leave you with a heroin blister. Certain addicts become, for whatever reason, almost as addicted to the needle—and addicted to the red flag, to the sight of their own blood being extracted—as to the heroin itself.

"When I couldn't get heroin, I would just shoot anything," Malloy says. "I would load up hot water and shoot it, just to feel the needle. I had to load it up and shoot it—it was a routine. So I started shooting Xanax, Klonopin, trying to shoot Vicodin, but that never works."

"I was the opposite," Callner says. "Every time I shot up, I would hear my mom's voice, telling me I'm a piece of sh\*\*. Plus, I'm not very vascular, so I had to shoot up on the outside of my arm, which meant looking at myself in the mirror. There was just something about that, five or six times a day, looking yourself in the eye and seeing the deterioration. And hating it."

## Alabama doctors write more opiate prescriptions per capita than those of any other state.

in Birmingham, a faith-based organization aimed at realistic preventative measures and connecting addicts with recovery resources. "Heroin is easier to get, and it's cheaper." His father was a child psychologist, he was planning on becoming one himself, and he was a trust-funder—twice. "Yeah, I blew through two trusts," he says, snorting.

He'd been a Marine and wanted to become a firefighter, but the only thing he could commit to for the long term—15 years—was oxy and heroin. Beyond the depleted trust funds, the deficit that seems to weigh on him most heavily is that of time. He is 32 years old and has spent nearly half of his life as an active drug user. "Going back to school is interesting," he says. "I'm in some English 101 class at 8:30 in the morning, that I've taken four or five times"—there were five or six colleges, and five rehabs in four years—"and I'm in there with a bunch of 18- and 19-year-olds. It's humbling. Humiliating. But when you get sober, you need something to ground you."

He'd derailed his life before it had really gotten under way, but his roommates in his last residential program—which he got out of just last week, with seven months' sobriety—were a personal-injury attorney, a senior banker, and an accountant.

"And then there was me."

**T**HEY call it the "red flag." Some heroin addicts fall in love with the ritual of shooting up. Some of them have been known to shoot up when they don't have any heroin, just to feel the calming presence of the needle in the arm. The ritual is familiar enough to anybody who has spent any time in that world: You put the chunk of tar or bit of powder in the spoon, squirt a little water in with the syringe, heat it up to get it to dissolve, drop a little pinch of cotton into the

"I remember using dull, dull needles, and having to stab myself until I found a vein," recovering addict Dalton Smith says. "But I was obsessed with when you got the needle in, and pulling it back and seeing the blood. The red flag." Smith sometimes shot up imaginary heroin, convinced that bits of carpet lint were heroin. "The fuzz—I remember seeing the fuzz from the carpet in my rig."

None of these guys comes from Heartbreak Hill. Some of them came from some money, came from good schools, went to college, had successful, high-income parents. But there was also divorce, and addiction in the family—one young recovering addict is in the precarious situation of having to live with his alcoholic father—and a general sense of directionlessness. They are from that great vast America whose people simultaneously have too much and too little.

One or two breaks in a different direction and Dalton Smith might have been the youth minister at your church. (He still might be.) He's got that heartbreakingly distinctive shamefacedness that you see whenever you're around young addicts or young prisoners (there's some substantial overlap on that Venn diagram) or other young people with woeful self-inflicted injuries, a shadow across the face that says that while he may be trying to have faith in whatever Higher Power sets His almighty hand on recovering junkies in Alabama, that everything happens for a reason and that he's right where he's supposed to be, he'd really give anything to be able to go back and change one thing on that chain of decisions that led to his messing his life up nearly irreparably before he was old enough to rent a car from Avis. He's 22 years old. There's a long chain of bad decisions that goes back to the beginning of his self-destructive career as a drug addict, and at its beginning is a twelve-year-old child. And now he knows a lot of words for heroin.

"Down here, they sometimes call it 'BOY.'"

NR



Text

# Kelvin Cochran's Crucible

*The former Atlanta fire chief's Christianity cost him his career*

BY DAVID FRENCH

**H**ERETICS will be punished. That's the clear message of the zealots who are defying more than 200 years of American constitutional tradition in their effort to establish a new state church, the church of sexual freedom. To the adherents of this church, no amount of virtue can compensate for apostasy. Even the best and brightest must be swept aside if they do not believe.

By now the stories of the victims or intended victims are familiar. Brendan Eich's brilliance couldn't save him at Mozilla. Thousands of hours of good works can't save Christian student organizations from being pushed off campus. Even adoption agencies must conform to the new faith, pledging their willingness to place babies with homosexual couples, or close their doors. Indeed, no less an authority than the solicitor general of the United States weighed in on whether Christian colleges should be able to keep their tax-exempt status as charitable organizations—it is “going to be an issue,” he predicted.

The stories are legion, and the facts of the individual injustice can get lost as one lists outrage after outrage, so it is worth taking a close look at one story—a story that shows precisely how the new intolerance works and demonstrates unequivocally that no amount of virtue can overcome heresy on questions of sexual morality. It is the story of former Atlanta fire chief Kelvin Cochran.

In any other circumstance, Cochran would be the subject of inspirational books and movies—a firefighter's version of Ben Carson's *Gifted Hands*. Cochran, an African American, was born in Confederate Memorial Hospital in Shreveport, La., on January 23, 1960, when segregation still ruled much of the South. He was the fourth of four boys, and his mother had six children in all. Born into deep poverty, he saw his family's situation grow desperate when his alcoholic father left home, never to return. His mother raised the Cochran kids by herself.

Their poverty was so deep that they often ran out of food and were reduced to eating mayonnaise sandwiches. When they wanted something sweet, they made “sugar water,” spooning sugar into tap water. Speaking of this time, Cochran says, “I learned how awful poverty really was.” He says he also learned that it was “awful” not to have a father at home.

In spite of his poverty, his single-parent family, and the continuing reality of segregation, Cochran was raised in a community that was both faithful and patriotic. He grew up going to church,

and the adults in his congregation gave him a clear message: His “dreams could come true” if he had faith in God, got a good education, respected his elders, and treated others the way they liked to be treated.

At an early age, Cochran knew he wanted to be a firefighter, from the moment he saw a “big red Shreveport fire truck” pull up outside his shotgun house to put out a neighbor's fire. He was in awe of the truck and the firefighters and was filled with a sense of possibility and purpose.

Interestingly, although the Shreveport Fire Department was all white, not a single adult told him that he couldn't fulfill his dream. Instead, they repeated their mantra: faith, education, respect, and the Golden Rule.

Cochran took their lessons to heart. He graduated from Shreveport's Woodlawn High School in 1978, and, after a short stint at Louisiana Tech, he applied to the fire department. In 1981, he was hired—only the “eighth or ninth” black firefighter in Shreveport.

The Shreveport Fire Department was beginning to integrate, but it had not yet embraced tolerance and equality. In discussing those early years, Cochran looks pained. He makes it clear that he “wasn't a victim,” but he faced what he simply calls “challenges.” He says that even then, however, his greatest fear wasn't discrimination or an “overwhelming fire” but rather that he wouldn't be able to do his job, to do all that his captain asked him to do.

So he studied, and he studied. Then he studied even more. Because he knew the job so well, he became a training officer early. He was a captain in the training academy after only four years (it usually takes twelve). In ten years, he was an assistant chief (it usually takes more than 20 years). After only 18 years, he became the first black fire chief of the Shreveport Fire Department.

Cochran led the department with what he called a “staunch determination to make sure that no member under his watch” would face the discrimination he had faced. He says that he wanted to create an administration of “justice and equity and compassion.”

As chief at Shreveport, Cochran saw his career take off in earnest. He was elected second vice president of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, then first vice president. He became president of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association. Eight years after he became chief in Shreveport, Mayor Shirley Franklin recruited him to become Atlanta's fire chief. In 2009, Barack Obama appointed him U.S. fire administrator, to run the Fire Administration—a division of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Atlanta Fire Department suffered, however, with budget cuts leading to a shrunken, demoralized force. Mayor Kasim Reed, Shirley Franklin's successor in Atlanta, recruited Cochran to return, and Cochran moved back—eager, he says, to take on the challenge.

The challenge, as he described it, was represented by “-isms”—racism, sexism, nepotism, territorialism—all the factors that made the workplace contentious. He responded by creating what he called a “participatory management structure.” When he made key decisions, he solicited input from “every rank, race, shift, and gender.” He consciously included LGBT firefighters. “I gave every group a voice,” he says.

Cochran developed the Atlanta fire-rescue doctrine and worked with Mayor Reed to hire more firefighters and reopen



closed stations. He got results. Atlanta—for the first time—became a “Class 1” city, the highest fire-protection rating, given to only 60 cities in the United States out of 49,010 reviewed. Firefighter and civilian deaths and injuries decreased on his watch. He accomplished these results all while focusing on “justice, equity, and compassion.” No employee ever accused him of discrimination.

To this point, Kelvin Cochran’s story is one that would make a university diversity officer rejoice. Born poor and black, he rose above poverty and discrimination to become not only a professional leader but also one who dedicated himself to combating the discrimination that had wounded him early in life. He was professional. He was inclusive. He was compassionate.

UNFORTUNATELY for Cochran, however, he was also Christian—and that brings us to the rest of the story.

Everyone knew about his faith, which meant that people sometimes shared their own faith with him. But he’d never “go there” with colleagues, he says, unless they spoke first.

On occasion, Cochran led Bible studies in his spare time, and in 2012 he led a discussion and study group called “Quest for Authentic Manhood.” As part of that effort, he prayed about God’s purpose for men. As he studied, God’s query to Adam after the Fall—“Who told you that you were naked?”—kept “repeating in [his] head.”

“Naked” was a metaphor for “condemned and deprived,” he concluded. To be clothed means to be “redeemed and restored.” By accepting Christ, men are “clothed” in the righteousness of God.

Cochran soon began working on a book that explored these themes, writing it early in the morning and in his spare weekend time. When he started writing, he asked Nina Hickson, the City of Atlanta’s ethics officer, whether there were any ethical or regulatory problems with a city employee’s writing a “non-work-related, faith-based book.” He claims that Hickson told him that so long as the subject matter of the book did not deal with the “city government or fire department,” he was cleared to write it.

Cochran self-published his work in late 2013. Directed at Christian men, it’s 162 pages, only six of which deal with sex and sexuality—taking the completely conventional, orthodox Christian position that sex outside of male–female marriage is contrary to God’s will. This is the position of the Catholic Church and every orthodox Protestant denomination in the United States.

For almost a year, Cochran handed out the book to a few individuals with whom he worked, mainly people who had already discussed their Christian faith with him. He also shared it with the mayor and three members of the Atlanta city council. At no point did any fire-department employee complain to him about the book.

One employee, however, showed a few pages—the pages dealing with sex and sexuality—to an openly gay Atlanta City Council member, Alex Wan. Wan allegedly then showed those pages to Atlanta’s human-resources commissioner, Yvonne Yancey.

The idea that an Atlanta fire chief could possibly hold to—and express—orthodox Christian beliefs kicked up a firestorm. After a flurry of meetings, Atlanta police chief George Turner called Cochran and informed him of the controversy. Four days later, Cochran was suspended without pay. His suspension letter failed to outline the charges against him and also failed to detail a single act in violation of the 21 provisions of



*Former fire chief Kelvin Cochran in Atlanta, August 17, 2012*

the city’s Code of Ordinances that constitute a “cause of action” for termination.

While the city’s formal communications to Cochran were vague, Mayor Reed’s comments were precise. He was furious at the content of Cochran’s book. He said, “I profoundly disagree with and am deeply disturbed by the sentiments expressed in the paperback regarding the LGBT community.” The mayor expressed his disgust at length, stating, “I want to be clear that the material in Chief Cochran’s book is not representative of my personal beliefs, and is inconsistent with the administration’s work to make Atlanta a more welcoming city for all of her citizens—regardless of their sexual orientation, gender, race, and religious beliefs.”

On Facebook, Reed kept up his denunciation, writing, “The contents of the book do not reflect the views of Mayor Reed or the Administration.” He also said he would require Cochran to complete “sensitivity training.” Making it clear that Atlanta respects only one point of view (“the city’s”), Councilmember Wan declared, “I respect each individual’s right to have their own thoughts, beliefs, and opinions, but when you’re a city employee, and those thoughts, beliefs, and opinions are different from the city’s, you have to check them at the door.”

ON January 6, 2015, the City of Atlanta fired Cochran—without providing him the proper process prescribed by city codes and, he claims, without providing him an opportunity to respond to either his suspension or his termination. At no point did any employee of the fire department complain of mistreatment or discrimination.

Atlanta is now claiming that Cochran’s termination had nothing to do with the contents of his book—the mayor’s statements notwithstanding. No, the man who led the fire department to its first-ever Class 1 rating, and who had in the process saved lives

of firefighters and civilians, had to be immediately terminated because he didn't receive "prior written approval" from the board of ethics before self-publishing his book. The city cited a provision of the Atlanta Code of Ordinances regulating outside "private employment" or "services for private interests."

But this provision does not apply to publishing a book on religious themes. And if it were applied to Cochran's book, it would constitute an unconstitutional prior restraint on speech: The city may not require its employees to obtain written consent before expressing their religious beliefs.

The *New York Times* has applauded Atlanta's actions, writing that he should be held to "a different standard." But which standard is that? One that holds that a man who has fought discrimination his entire life may be fired merely for expressing orthodox Christian beliefs? The *Times* claims that LGBT employees should "fear" discrimination. But should they fear the man who included them in his "participatory management structure," consulting LGBT colleagues before making significant departmental decisions?

The "fear" that now exists is felt by Christians in the department—men and women who believe, Cochran says, that they might be next in line for termination. The City of Atlanta has apparently made its own determination on sexual morality, and city employees now must either express the city's viewpoint or remain silent. The state church has been established, and the state church has spoken. Endorse sexual liberty, or shut your mouth. The only other option is the unemployment line.

There is hope for Cochran, however. So far, even an Obama-appointed federal judge has been unimpressed with Atlanta's legal arguments and has turned back the city's attempt to dismiss Cochran's lawsuit challenging his termination. His attorneys, my old colleagues at the Alliance Defending Freedom, are beginning the discovery process, and more details will doubtless emerge.

For now, however, Cochran's story is a warning to those Christians who mistakenly believe that virtue and good works can insulate them from the wrath of the sexual revolutionaries. The double standards are clear—cities prohibited by law from discriminating against Christians now feel free to demand silence from Christian employees while openly advocating the sexual liberation of the LGBT community. In Atlanta, pluralism means conformity, and only one side of the religious and cultural debate truly enjoys the protection of the First Amendment.

The lesson here is clear. If you believe you are safe from the new thought police, you are wrong. Cochran fought discrimination his entire life. Cochran was an Obama appointee in the Department of Homeland Security. Cochran made a concerted effort to include his LGBT employees. Cochran was fired.

And that brings us to the final, sad irony. Cochran began his career fighting discrimination on the basis of his race. His faith gave him the fortitude to withstand the racist onslaught. And now that same faith has cost him the career that he loved. The Left that boasts about fighting Jim Crow is now attempting to replicate its systemic exclusion and repression. White supremacy is fading away, but a state-endorsed sexual revolution creates new categories of second-class citizens.

Chief Cochran's life is a story of enduring first one form of discrimination, then another. The faith that sustained him is now the faith that has condemned him, at least in the eyes of the world. The faith that empowered Cochran's career has also ended it. He is a heretic, after all, and heretics deserve their punishment. **NR**

# Seeing North Korea

*Wishful thinking has prevented  
effective threat reduction*

BY NICHOLAS EBERSTADT

**N**ORTH KOREA is embarked on a steady, methodical, and relentless journey whose intended endpoint is a credible capability to hit New York and Washington with nuclear weapons. Pyongyang's nuclear test in January is only the latest reminder that America's policy response to nuclear proliferation in North Korea is a prolonged, and thoroughly bipartisan, failure. Our policy is a failure because our public and our leaders do not understand our adversary and his intentions. We cannot hope to cope successfully with the North Korean threat until we do.

The late "Dear Leader" Kim Jong Il (son of regime founder "Great Leader" Kim Il Sung; father to current "Dear Respected Marshal" Kim Jong Un) used to speak of hiding his own politics, and in fact his entire country, "inside a fog"—of deliberately concealing his government's calculations, strengths, and vulnerabilities from foreign eyes. Yet our seemingly unending inability to fathom Pyongyang's true objectives, and our attendant proclivity for being taken by surprise over and over again by North Korean actions, is not just a matter of succumbing to Pyongyang's strategic deceptions, assiduous as those efforts might be.

The trouble, rather, is that even our top foreign-policy experts and our most sophisticated diplomatists are perforce creatures of their own cultural heritage and intellectual environment. We Americans are, so to speak, children of the Enlightenment, steeped in the precepts of our highly globalized era. Which is to say: We have absolutely no common point of reference with the worldview or moral compass or first premises of the closed-society decision-makers who control the North Korean state. Americans' first instincts are to misunderstand practically everything that the North Korean state is really about.

The "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" (DPRK) is a project pulled by tides and shaped by sensibilities all but forgotten to the contemporary West. North Korea is a hereditary Asian dynasty (currently on its third Kim)—but one maintained by Marxist-Leninist police-state powers unimaginable to earlier epochs of Asian despots, and supported by a recently invented and quasi-religious ideology.

And what exactly is that ideology? Along with its notorious variant of emperor worship, "Juche thought" also extols an essentially messianic—and unapologetically racist—vision of history: one in which the long-abused Korean people finally

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Text



assume their rightful place in the universe by standing up against the foreign races that have long oppressed them, at last reuniting the entire Korean peninsula under an independent socialist state (i.e., the DPRK). Although highly redacted in broadcasts aimed at foreign ears, this call for reunification of the *minjok* (race) and for retribution against the enemy races or powers (starting with America and Japan) constantly reverberates within North Korea, sounded by the regime's highest authorities.

This is where the nuke program fits into North Korea's designs. In Pyongyang's thinking, the indispensable instrument for achieving the DPRK's grand historical ambitions must be a supremely powerful military: more specifically, one possessed of a nuclear arsenal that can imperil and break the foreign enemies who protect and prop up the vile puppet state in the south, so that the DPRK can consummate its unconditional unification and give birth to its envisioned earthly Korean-race utopia.

In earlier decades, Pyongyang might have seen multiple paths to this Elysium—but with the collapse of the Soviet empire, the long-term decline of the DPRK's industrial infrastructure, and the gradually accumulating evidence that South Korea was not going to succumb on its own to the revolutionary upheaval

North Korea has been diligently working on everything that would be required for such a confrontation—miniaturization of nuclear warheads, intercontinental (as well as submarine-launched) ballistic missiles, even cyberwarfare (remember the Sony hacking episode?). Note further that while the North Korean leadership may be highly tolerant of casualties (on the part of others, that is), it most assuredly is not suicidal itself. Quite the contrary: Its acute interest in self-preservation is demonstrated *prima facie* by the fact of its very survival some 25 years and more after the demise of the USSR and Eastern European Communism. It would be unwise of us to presume that only one of the two forces arrayed along the DMZ is capable of thinking about what it would take to deter the other in a time of crisis on the peninsula.

At this juncture, as so often in the past, serious people around the world are calling to “bring North Korea back to the table” to try to settle the nuclear issue. However, seeing the DPRK for what it is, rather than what we would like it to be, should oblige us to recognize a highly unpleasant truth. The real, existing North Korean leadership (as opposed to the imaginary version some Westerners would like to negotiate with) will never willingly

## The one thing ‘engagement’ can never produce is North Korean denuclearization.

Pyongyang so dearly wished for it, the nuclear option increasingly looked to be the one and only trail by which to reach the Promised Kingdom.

To be sure: Like all other states, the North Korean regime also relies upon diplomacy to pursue its official aims—thus, for example, the abiding call for a “peace treaty” with the U.S. to bring a formal end to the Korean War (since 1953 only an armistice, or cease-fire, has been in place). Yet strangely few foreign-policy specialists seem to understand why Pyongyang is so fixated on such a particular document. If the U.S. agreed to a peace treaty, Pyongyang insists, it would then also have to agree to a withdrawal of its forces from South Korea and to a dissolution of its military alliance with Seoul—for the danger of “external armed attack” upon which the Seoul–Washington Mutual Defense Treaty is predicated would by definition no longer exist. If all this could come to pass, North Korea would win a huge victory without firing a shot.

**B**UT with apologies to Clausewitz, diplomacy is merely war by other means for Pyongyang. And for the dynasty that the onetime anti-Japanese guerrilla fighter Kim Il Sung established, policy and war are inseparable—this is why the DPRK is the most militarized society on the planet. This is also why the answer to the unification question that so preoccupies the North Korean leadership appears to entail meticulous and incessant preparations, already under way for decades, to fight and win a limited nuclear war against the United States.

To almost any Western reader, the notion that North Korea might actually be planning to stare down the U.S. in some future nuclear face-off will sound preposterous if not outright insane. Yet remember: As we already know from press reports,

give up its nuclear option. Never. Acquiescing in denuclearization would be tantamount to abandoning the sacred mission of Korean unification—which is to say, disavowing the DPRK's *raison d'être*. Submitting to foreign demands to denuclearize could well mean more than humiliation and disgrace for the North Korean leadership: It could mean delegitimization and destabilization for the regime as well. And for this reason, international entreaties—summitry, conferencing, bargaining, and all the rest—can never succeed in convincing the DPRK to relinquish its nuclear program. Sovereign governments simply do not trade away their vital national interests.

Now, this is not to say that Western nonproliferation parleys with the DPRK never have any results to show at all. We know they can result in blandishments (as with North Korea's custom of “money for meeting”) and in resource transfers (as with the Clinton administration's “Agreed Framework” shipments of heavy fuel oil). They can provide external diplomatic cover for the DPRK nuclear program, as was in effect afforded under the intermittent 2003–07 Six-Party Talks in Beijing. They can even lure North Korea's interlocutors into unexpected unilateral concessions, as witnessed in the final years of the George W. Bush administration, when Washington unfroze illicit North Korean overseas funds and removed Pyongyang from its list of state sponsors of terrorism in the misbegotten hope of a “breakthrough.” The one thing “engagement” can never produce, however, is North Korean denuclearization.

Note, too, that in every realm of international transaction, from commercial contracts to security accords, the record shows that even when Western bargainers think they have made a deal with North Korea, the DPRK side never has any compunction about violating the understanding if doing so would serve its purposes. This may outrage us, but it should not surprise us—because, under North Korea's moral code, if there

would be any advantage to gain from cheating foreigners, then *not* cheating would be patently unpatriotic, a disloyal blow against the Motherland.

Yes: Things would be so much easier for us if North Korea simply agreed to the deal *we* want *them* to accept. But if we put the wishful thinking to one side, a clear-eyed view of the North Korea *problematique* must be resigned to the grim reality that diplomacy can have only a very limited and highly specific role in addressing our gathering North Korean problem. Diplomacy must have some role, because it is barbaric not to talk with one's opponent—communication can help both sides avoid needless and potentially disastrous miscalculations. But the notion of a “grand bargain” with Pyongyang—in which all mutual concerns are simultaneously settled, as the “Perry Process” conjectured back in the 1990s and others have subsequently prophesied—is nothing but a dream.

**I**T is time to set aside the illusion of “engaging” North Korea to effect nonproliferation and to embrace instead a paradigm that has a chance of actually working. Call this “threat reduction”: Through a coherent long-term strategy, working with allies and others but also acting unilaterally, the United States can blunt, then mitigate, and eventually help eliminate the killing force of the North Korean state.

In broad outline, North Korean threat reduction requires progressive development of more-effective defenses against the DPRK's means of destruction while simultaneously weakening Pyongyang's capabilities for supporting both conventional and strategic offense.

A more effective defense against the North Korean threat would consist mainly, though not entirely, of military measures. Restoring recently sacrificed U.S. capabilities would be essential. Likewise, more and better missile defense: providing terminal high-altitude area defense systems (and more) to South Korea and Japan, and moving forward on missile defense in earnest for the U.S. It would be incumbent on South Korea to reduce its own population's exposure to North Korean death from the skies through military modernization and civil defense. The DPRK would be served notice that 60 years of highly restrictive rules of engagement for allied forces at the DMZ and in the peninsula had just come to an end—that Pyongyang could no longer count on “consequence-free” provocations at the DMZ or anywhere else in the peninsula. But diplomacy would make a difference here as well: most importantly, by strengthening our alliances throughout Asia in general and repairing the currently frayed South Korea–Japan relationship in particular. Today's petty bickering between Seoul and Tokyo reeks of inter-war European politics at its worst; leaders who want to live in a post-war order need to rise above such distractions.

As for weakening the DPRK's military economy, which is the foundation of all its offensive capabilities, a good place to start would be reinvigorating current counter-proliferation efforts, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Missile Technology Control Regime. But that would be only a start. Given the “military first” disposition of the North Korean economy, restricting its overall potential is necessary as well. South Korea's subsidized trade with the North, for example, should come to an end. And put Pyongyang back on the State

Department's terror-sponsors list—it never should have been taken off. Sanctions with a genuine bite should be implemented: The dysfunctional DPRK economy is uniquely susceptible to these, and, amazing as this may sound, the current sanctions strictures for North Korea are weaker than, say, those enforced until recently for Iran. (We can enforce such sanctions unilaterally, by the way.) And not least important: Revive such efforts as the Illicit Activities Initiative, the brief but tremendously successful Dubya-era task force for tracking and freezing North Korea's dirty money abroad.

Then there is the China question. Received wisdom in some quarters notwithstanding, it is by no means impossible for America and her allies to pressure the DPRK if China does not cooperate (see previous paragraph). That said, China has been allowed to play a double game with North Korea for far too long, and it is time for Beijing to pay a penalty for all its support for the most odious regime on the planet today. We can begin by exacting it in diplomatic venues all around the world, starting with the U.N. Non-governmental organizations can train a spotlight on Beijing's complicity in the North Korean regime's crimes. And international humanitarian action should shame China into opening a safe transit route to the free world for North Korean refugees attempting to escape their oppressors.

If North Korean subjects enjoyed greater human rights, the DPRK killing machine could not possibly operate as effectively as it does today. Activists will always worry about the instrumentalization of human-rights concerns for other policy ends, and rightly. Today and for the foreseeable future, however, there is no contradiction between the objectives of human-rights promotion and nonproliferation in the DPRK. North Korea's human-rights situation is vastly worse than that in apartheid South Africa—why hasn't the international community (and South Korean civil society) found its voice on this real-time, ongoing tragedy? The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner on Human Rights has already prepared a commission of inquiry on the situation in the DPRK. Let governments of conscience seek international criminal accountability for North Korea's leadership.

Many in the West talk of “isolating” North Korea, as if this were an objective in its own right. But a serious DPRK threat-reduction strategy would not do so. The North Korean regime depends upon isolation from the outside world to maintain its grip and pursue its international objectives. The regime is deadly afraid of what it terms “ideological and cultural poisoning”: that is, of foreign media, international information, cultural exchanges, and the like. We should be saying: Bring on the “poisoning”! The more contact that enslaved population has with the outside world, the better. We should even consider technical training abroad for North Koreans in accounting, law, economics, and other disciplines—because someday, in a better future, that nation will need a cadre of Western-style technocrats to help it rejoin the world.

This brings us to the last item: preparing for a successful reunification in a post-DPRK peninsula. The Kim regime *is* the North Korean nuclear threat; that threat will not end until the DPRK disappears. We cannot tell when, or how, this will occur. But it is not too soon to commence the wide-ranging and painstaking international planning and preparations that will facilitate divided Korea's long-awaited reunion as a single peninsula, free and whole.

**NR**



## The Revolution Will Have a Terrible Soundtrack

It is delicious to see Bernie Sanders push Madam Hillary leftward to the north of Lenin. It is revelatory to see the soul of the Democratic party channeled through a honking, septuagenarian collectivist whose ossified ideals predate Dylan's going electric. It's just a joy to watch HRC imply that Wall Street quavers when they hear the approaching clump of her sensibly shod feet, and to realize that the half-million-dollar paychecks they threw her like meat over the wall to satiate the wolves were wasted, all wasted. But at some point you have to realize that there's a problem with Bernie: His fans are fools, his platform is a lie, and his music is the absolute worst.

His fans are often youngsters, nostrils full of the vaporish ideals favored by those who moved from the parental nest to the intellectual hive-mind of college. They believe that the perfect model for the organization of a diverse, immense, sprawling society like the United States is Amsterdam, because weed is legal and everyone rides bikes. This utopia is financed by taxes on the rich, whose obese corpses are enthroned in gilded chambers like immense Queen Bees, dapper bureaucrats whisking off the gilded eggs they excrete. Awesome!

Conversations with these people can be lots of fun.

*One-tenth of the One Percent has more money than the gross national product of Gambia over the last ten years! Here's a map. Point to Gambia. What? That's not relevant. Two-tenths of the top 5 percent pay less in taxes than the entire school budget of the city of Chicago! If we raised taxes, poor kids would learn more! Would it affect critical factors such as family cohesion, or reading to kids when they're young, or making academic excellence a primary cultural value? That's blaming the victim. We need more investment! Raise taxes on the people who speculate! If we passed a tax on speculations, we could fund workshops on environmental justice that would raise awareness of the historic and systemic effects of industrial pollution in challenged areas that disenfranchise stakeholders in the transition to the new economy! GOD I hate rich people.*

If you persist, you point out that the One Percent, if billed for Bernie-Bennies, will be found to have insufficient funds. The obvious rejoinder: Cut defense. These two words have an almost erotic appeal to the Left. When you note that the devolution of the U.S. military to the Coast Guard isn't enough to pay for the Bernifits, they might shrug: Maybe not, but it's a start.

Which leads us to the second irritation: Bernie's lies. For Bernie's plans to work, the State has to take your stuff. He'll probably be content to take half, for starters. There are two ways to do this.

Jackbooted thugs, which certainly has an upside. The State could open massive jackboot factories in every state;

hundreds of thousands of people could be employed designing, making, and distributing jackboots. (They would be unionized, naturally. The Jackboot-Manufacturers Union would have the power to sway elections.)

The Jackbooted Thugs, or JBTs, would be sent house to house to take your stuff to pay for Bernifits. This would be handy for finding bad mean scary guns, but that's just frosting. The main objective would be taking half of your property, putting it on the truck, having you sign right here . . . and here . . . and here, thank you. You will be receiving a Citizen's Entitlement Card in six to eight weeks, and it can be redeemed for aspirin or community-college lectures about Transgender Literature in Post-Colonial Asia. Have a nice day. Sorry we ran over your cat.

This would not go well. You can imagine the protests: "The JBTs came into my house to take half my stuff and broke up my Franklin Mint collectible 'Legends of Nifty Fifties' plates. Look on eBay! The Lucy one goes for \$40, but it's a hundred bucks if you have the Ricky one, too. What kind of economically illiterate tax-collection system breaks up a set?"

Or people might protest the confiscation on general principle, believing the government had no right to waltz in and cart away their stuff. Americans are odd like that. It gets our back up, by cracky. This is why President Bernie would never send out the JBTs but would simply use the old established method: taking your stuff before it lands in your hands. A 50 percent tax on everyone, with rebates to ameliorate the regressive aspects of the necessary VAT.

Lots of Millennials are fine with this, because they grew up under Obama and can't imagine getting a job that pays much anyway. If half their income goes away and stuff's free, they're probably making out pretty good. Especially if you get, like, paid family leave for six weeks if you get a cat. (If the government runs it over, you get another one.)

Finally: The worst thing about the Sanders campaign, aside from everything it stands for, is the music. I heard a broadcast of a Bernie rally wherein two awful singers attempted to harmonize a version of "This Land Is Your Land." It was like listening to a tree sloth mate with a cheese grater. When the youthful fans hear these wheezy old folky tunes, they believe they're connecting with some pure, authentic era of American radicalism, when various bearded Commie-lite buskers crooned deeply meaningful speculations about what they'd do if they had a hammer.

I know what they'd do. They'd hammer down the doors of the kulaks to get the sacks of wheat hidden under the floorboards, is what they'd do. Jackboots are awesome if the right people are wearing them. Recycled plastics for soles, hemp for fabric? Totally sustainable. **NR**

Mr. Lileks blogs at [www.lileks.com](http://www.lileks.com).



Text



# The Long View BY ROB LONG



Text

## From the Archives of the Donald J. Trump Presidential Library: The Collected Diaries of Donald J. Trump: Chapter 5: “1958: Big Boy Pants”

### THURSDAY:

Dear Kitty:

That’s what I’ve decided to call you. The name just came to me from someplace, like a thunderbolt. Not sure where it comes from, but I like the sound of it. Kitty. Maybe from “Miss Kitty,” a character in my favorite radio show, *Gunsmoke*? Unclear. No matter.

I am writing this first-ever entry in my JOURNAL which is what it is, okay? It is NOT A DIARY and I really don’t like it when Dad makes that noise like a coughing sound when he sees me with you, Kitty, and my large purple pen. “Telling all your secrets in that diary of yours?” he says. And I say, “NO FATHER THIS IS NOT A DIARY!” and remind him that diaries are FOR GIRLS and journals are FOR BOYS and I AM A BOY.

I AM A BOY.

And also: If he hates it so much why did he GIVE ME A JOURNAL for my birthday, anyway?? Good question!!

Anyways, Kitty, here’s what’s happening in my (our) life. I wasn’t planning on making a big deal about turning twelve this year (!!!) because I’m already considered very mature for my age. Most of the grownups in my life already consider me a man in many ways. I shop at Big Boy stores already which according to MY MOTHER WHO DOESN’T LIE is because

I’m growing quickly and IS NOT because of the other thing that the kids call me, mostly the poor ones who are trash anyway according to MY MOTHER WHO KNOWS and which I will only mention once, Kitty, and then never mention again:

Fat.

Okay, so, please go on: I wasn’t going to make it a big deal but then one of my teachers who I really think is more like a friend because as I mentioned I’m thought of as very mature for my age, which is why I spend recess etc. with the teachers instead of with the other children who are very immature AND NOT NICE TO ME, said, “Gracious, Donald, did you ever think that maybe if you had a birthday party it might be a good way to make some friends?”

So, Kitty, guess what? GUESS WHAT? I asked Dad and he said, “Yes!” but of course he didn’t just say yes, I had to promise to learn a sport (yuck!!) but we ARE HAVING A BIRTHDAY PARTY!!

### FRIDAY:

The boys in my class may not realize it yet, but I will remember all of their names and someday they will regret the moment they all decided IN A VERY MEAN and COORDINATED EFFORT to tell me in no uncertain terms that none of them would be coming to my party.

I had envelopes made and everything.

I am VERY ANGRY, Kitty, about all of this.

### TUESDAY:

Solution to the party problem! It came to me! Kitty, sometimes I surprise myself! I was sitting quietly in the dark, in my bedroom closet, eating the Baby Ruths I keep there for my quiet personal time, and it came to me. I will tell everyone in the class that Casey Stengel will be at

my party because he is a very close personal friend of mine and if they want to meet him THEY HAD BETTER BE NICE TO ME. They will believe this because, as I have mentioned, I am very mature for my age and most of my friends are adults.

### FRIDAY:

No surprise! The mean boys changed their minds and are now coming to my party. I WONDER WHAT CAUSED THAT????!!

No, actually, Kitty, I don’t wonder because I know exactly what did it. It was Casey Stengel.

Now I just need to figure out how to contact Mr. Stengel and get him to appear. Yankee Stadium is not too far from Queens.

I think if I explain the entire situation to Dad he will instantly “get it” and help me get the Yankees’ famous manager here to the house in time for cake and ice cream. Are the Yankees playing on Saturday?? Need to investigate.

### SATURDAY:

[Illegible]

### SUNDAY:

Dear Kitty:

Still very upset in re: yesterday’s “party,” which was not the first-class experience I was expecting and, frankly, was promised by the various adults in charge. I spent most of the day carefully compiling a list of the boys and girls who made such an IMMATURE big deal about not meeting Casey Stengel who is only the manager of the Yankees and who were disruptive and RUDE during my magic act. I know that I shouldn’t have lied about Casey Stengel, Kitty, but I STILL DO NOT understand why some people are not nice to me.

Sad.

Mad.

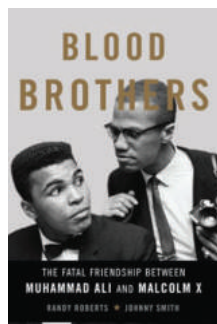
Bad.



# Books, Arts & Manners

## The Champ And Mr. X

JAMES ROSEN



*Blood Brothers: The Fatal Friendship between Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X*, by Randy Roberts and Johnny Smith (Basic, 392 pp., \$28.99)

“NOT many people,” Malcolm X told the writer George Plimpton in 1964, “know the quality of the mind he’s got in there.” The fiery minister for the Nation of Islam (NOI), head of its Harlem mosque and the sect’s most prominent spokesman, was talking about Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr., the strikingly pretty and unrelentingly loquacious 22-year-old boxer from Louisville who was soon to dethrone Sonny Liston, thuggish and frightful, an 8-to-1 betting favorite, as heavyweight champion of the world.

For nearly four years, the period that witnessed Clay’s rise from light-heavyweight Olympic gold to heavyweight title, the public had known him as a benign clown, the Little Richard of sports. He fought in an unorthodox and rococo style, hands held low as he pranced around opponents; Clay’s chief preoccupation seemed to be to avoid blemish to *my pretty face*. Eschewing the Joe Louis model for black athletes, of quiet humility before white audiences,

*Mr. Rosen is the chief Washington correspondent of Fox News and the author of Cheney One on One: A Candid Conversation with America’s Most Controversial Statesman.*

Clay proclaimed himself The Greatest, spouted amateurish poetry, tagged his opponents with derisive nicknames, and predicted, often accurately, the round in which he would dispense with them.

The sporting press had never seen anything like it. Yet even they overlooked the practical advantage the clown act derived from misdirection. Broadening the action beyond the ring lulled Clay’s opponents into complacency about his lethality inside it; focus on the Louisville Lip’s clowning obscured his speed of hand and foot, his gifts for spatial relations and evasion, his ability to take a punch. Only under such circumstances could members of the boxing press express surprise, when Liston and Clay finally met at ring center, that the challenger stood two inches taller than the champion.

In political terms, however, the act was harmless. Whenever sportswriters pitched him questions about the civil-rights movement, Clay cannily recoiled from controversy, steering the conversation back to his greatness, his prettiness, the big red Cadillac he would drive when he became champion; in this he showed the same agility, the same circular backpedaling, he had displayed on the streets of Louisville and when sparring for real.

As Randy Roberts and Johnny Smith demonstrate in *Blood Brothers*, Clay’s use of misdirection advanced still another objective. Not until the last weeks before the Liston fight in February 1964, when Malcolm X—freshly excommunicated from the Nation of Islam by its vengeful leader, Elijah Muhammad—started showing up at Clay’s training camp, did the public, prodded by a newly aroused press, awaken to the boxer’s membership for the past two years in the NOI, the era’s most controversial religious sect.

Clay was dyslexic and a slow reader, but his mind was fiercely instinctual and finely calibrated: He knew rhyming boasts would boost ticket sales but talk of the Black Muslims would flatten them. So Clay effectively hid his association with the Nation until he had secured the goal he had harbored since the age of twelve: the heavyweight championship. Only then did he put his loquacity to work on behalf of his religious fervor—starting, as history records, with his change of

name to Muhammad Ali. “Central to his life, relationships, and career,” the authors write, “was deception.”

Exhaustively researched and tautly written, *Blood Brothers* marks a milestone in the biographical literature of Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali, an invaluable addition to our understanding of America in the 1960s. In all it touches—the far-flung but interconnected worlds of race, religion, politics, sports, cities, organized crime, and the news media—this sober and detailed book, a dual biography that alternates between protagonists like a suspense novel, renders profound service. The authors unearth reams of new evidence, shine light on long-overlooked episodes, and hack away at the barnacles of mythology, thereby giving us the finest portrait yet of the doomed relationship that transformed Cassius Clay into Muhammad Ali.

History professors at Purdue and Georgia Tech, respectively, Roberts and Smith draw on an impressive array of sources: NOI telegrams contained in Malcolm X’s papers; FBI documents chronicling the Bureau’s surveillance of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm; Louisville police records and declassified State Department files; the private papers of Ali’s previous biographers, stored in locations as distant as the University of Oregon; the business correspondence of the Louisville Sponsoring Group, Clay’s original management firm; the archives of the NAACP, deposited at the Library of Congress; the contemporaneous reporting of mainstream newspapers and magazines, as well as black outlets, including the *Amsterdam News* and *Muhammad Speaks*; obscure TV and radio broadcasts; congressional-hearing transcripts and court affidavits; and a handful of original interviews.

Flashing their power early on, the authors show in the introduction how the late Alex Haley, ghostwriter of the bestselling *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965) and celebrated author of the 1976 novel *Roots*, a touchstone of American culture, misled Malcolm X—and subsequently the readers of the *Autobiography*—about an important matter. Tucked away in Haley’s papers at the New York Public Library’s Schomburg

Center for Research in Black Culture was evidence, in Haley's own hand, that he withheld from Malcolm the fact that, while the new heavyweight champion intended to abide by Elijah Muhammad's edict barring all NOI members from contact with the excommunicated Malcolm, Ali also told Haley that Malcolm was "still my brother, my friend." Instead, Haley conveyed the opposite message, both to Malcolm and to subsequent readers, using a sterner quote from Ali that Haley represented as having come from his own interview with the champ, but that Haley had in fact lifted from a recent issue of *Boxing*. This misapprehension Malcolm took to his grave.

Haley manipulated Malcolm's broken relationship with Ali in order to present a more sensational historical account. He selected and excluded events according to whether they fit into *his* agenda. In some cases, he tampered with the facts. But the truth was more complex than Haley let on.

This alone—the takedown of a major writer such as Haley—should guarantee *Blood Brothers* a wide audience, but there is much more that commends this transfixing book.

Armed with near-total comprehension of the daily whereabouts and activities of their two protagonists for a period of years, the authors chronicle in greater detail than ever before how Cassius Clay, elder son of a placid Baptist mother and a volatile Methodist father, gravitated to the self-help separatism of the Black Muslims; and how Malcolm Little, the career criminal who vaulted from a state penitentiary to the lieutenantcy of Elijah Muhammad's empire, slowly came to realize the unlimited potential that Clay, as both a boxer and a leader of black youth, held as an international ambassador for the NOI.

**F**OR Clay, the attraction germinated long before he met Malcolm: As early as October 1958, the FBI observed the 16-year-old Golden Gloves contender, on one of his earliest trips out of Louisville, conversing with NOI members outside their Atlanta mosque. The following year, a high-school teacher rebuked Clay for submitting an essay on the NOI, an early lesson in the need for him to conceal his affinity for the Black Muslims.

Witnesses to the Malcolm–Clay bond recognized it as unmistakably fraternal. Malcolm played the sage older brother, solemnly instructing Clay in NOI doctrines that only validated the rants that the Clay brothers, Cassius and Rudy, had grown up hearing about the evils of the white man from their father, Cassius Clay Sr. And Clay was the exuberant junior partner, bringing smiles to the face of the tightly wound minister as his daughters bounced on the boxer's lap. "In general," Malcolm told Haley, "I taught [Clay] that 90 percent of success would depend upon how alert and knowledgeable he became to the true natures and motives of all the people who flocked around him."

By that measure, both men failed, for the arc of Ali's whole career—his mismanaged finances, his susceptibility to those who encouraged him to fight long past when he should have stopped—testified to the champ's woeful incapacity for discerning well-intentioned voices. As Ali's longtime friend and photographer, Howard Bingham, told authorized biographer Thomas Hauser in *Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times* (1991): "Ali still lets people take advantage of him and doesn't always listen to the right people."

Paramount among those who advised Ali with jaundiced motives—indeed, *controlled* him—was Elijah Muhammad himself. Born to a sharecropper-turned-Baptist preacher in 1897, the seventh of 13 children, Elijah Poole left school in rural Georgia by the fourth grade. He migrated to Detroit in the 1920s and there came under the tutelage of NOI founder Wallace D. Fard, an ex-convict and door-to-door salesman whose home-brewed Islamic theology blended sensible prescriptions for clean living and black pride with sci-fi beliefs about spaceships and evil scientists raising armies of white devils on remote islands. When Fard disappeared—amid charges he had ordered a human sacrifice—Elijah Muhammad, as Fard had renamed Poole, assumed leadership of the NOI and proclaimed himself the one true Messenger of Allah.

NOI membership nearly evaporated during the four years Muhammad spent in prison in the World War II era, following his conviction on charges of sedition and draft evasion, but by the mid 1950s some 50 NOI temples were operating in 22 states. Each contributed soldiers to the Fruit of Islam (FOI), the vanguard of

security officers and enforcers who kept congregants in line by administering brutal beatings to renegade members. While the mainstream press portrayed the NOI as a hate group, citing its separatist rhetoric and vague talk of armed resistance, the reality was that it functioned more like a criminal syndicate, with revenues from temple dues, sales of *Muhammad Speaks*, and other compulsory enterprises keeping Elijah Muhammad in style while covering up his infidelities and punishing defectors.

Sports were of little interest to the Messenger, simply another manifestation of whites' exploitation of blacks. When he learned that Jeremiah X, minister for the Atlanta mosque and chief recruiter in the Deep South, was cultivating a relationship with Cassius and Rudy Clay, both boxers, Elijah Muhammad reprimanded Jeremiah, reminding him to make converts, "not fool around with fighters."

It so happened that the blossoming of the Malcolm X–Cassius Clay friendship, starting in early 1962, coincided with Clay's swiftest period of ascent through the heavyweight ranks and with Elijah Muhammad's rising displeasure with Malcolm's penchant for publicity—which grew most acute after Malcolm, then the leader of Temple No. 7 in Harlem, greeted the assassination of President Kennedy with a statement describing it as "the chickens coming home to roost." Elijah also learned that Malcolm had become aware of the Messenger's extramarital affairs and the children that those liaisons had produced; Elijah suspended Malcolm from the NOI before he could further probe those scandals. The sum total of these triangulated dynamics was that Elijah Muhammad discovered the value in having Cassius Clay around at more or less the same time he recognized the need to banish Malcolm X.

For a time, Malcolm and Clay ignored Muhammad's edict forbidding their association and continued their daily rap sessions with reporters as Clay readied for Liston in Miami Beach. For Malcolm, it was a calculated gambit, an attempt at leveraging Clay's celebrity to bolster his own standing within the NOI and perhaps to use the fighter as a human shield against FOI assassins. Here, as the Sixties came sharply into focus, Malcolm X—the shrewd tactician behind NOI's expansion in the previous decade—miscalculated. In the authors' words: "In a



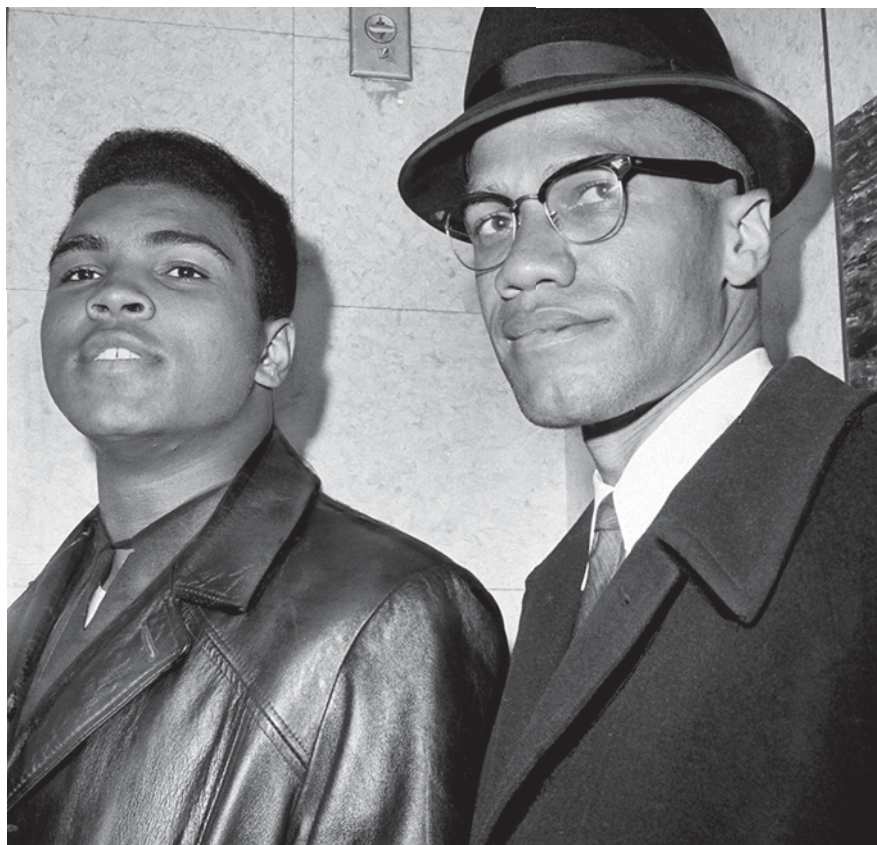
moment of weakness, he exploited his friendship with Clay, manipulating him and withholding the truth about his [own] future in the Nation. In a desperate attempt to prove his value to Elijah, he offered to deliver Clay to Chicago after the [Liston] fight, treating Cassius like some prize that could be bartered or traded. But Elijah did not have to buy Clay's loyalty. He already owned it."

Indeed, after capturing the title—at a time when he knew Malcolm X had been marked for death—Ali coldly turned his back. "Muhammad taught Malcolm X everything he knows," the champ said in March 1964. "So I couldn't go with the child, I go with the daddy." Ali "understood the choice he had to make," write Roberts and Smith: "And as he had so often before, he chose the less dangerous path. . . . Ali was not innocent. He had joined the chorus of violent ringleaders who raged about punishing Malcolm. . . . Without throwing a punch or raising his hand, Ali managed to hound the man he had once called his brother."

"He's just a boy," Malcolm said of his ex-friend. "He doesn't know what he's doing. He's being used." Any chance at reconciliation ended, of course, with the assassination of Malcolm X—almost certainly on the orders, or in line with the wishes, of Elijah Muhammad—by a squad of FOI enforcers inside Harlem's Audubon Ballroom in February 1965.

In time—specifically, in April 1969, when Ali's conscientious objection to the Vietnam War had resulted in his being stripped of his title belt and license to box, and when, as the authors note, he "could not raise money or generate good publicity for the Nation"—he, too, fell prey to Elijah's sanction and was suspended from the NOI. The nominal transgression was Ali's statement to Howard Cosell, on *ABQ's Side World of Sports*, that he would return to boxing if the money was right—a seeming contradiction of Ali's original stand on religious principle. Unlike Malcolm X, however, Ali received an unspoken pardon and was permitted to rejoin NOI around the time his boxing career resumed.

JOURNALISTS who covered Ali for extended periods, as well as others who knew him well—or as well as a figure of so many faces and guises could be known—have attested to the manifest



Cassius Marcellus Clay (Muhammad Ali) with Malcolm X in Harlem, 1964

fear of the Black Muslims that guided the fighter's actions for years to come. One example: In *Sound and Fury: A Powerful Life, One Bateful Friendship* (2006), the brilliant and nuanced portrait of the Ali-Cosell relationship by Dave Kindred, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* sportswriter whose residency aboard the Ali bandwagon dated back to 1966, the fighter was quoted as whispering to the reporter in November 1974, shortly after recapturing the heavyweight crown from George Foreman: "I would have gotten out of [the NOI] a long time ago. But you saw what they did to Malcolm X. I ain't gonna end up like Malcolm X."

This raises the chief problem with *Blood Brothers*, self-inflicted and wholly unnecessary in a book of such strength and value: namely, the pejorative claims its authors make vis-à-vis their predecessors on the subject of Malcolm and Ali, even as Roberts and Smith time and again acknowledge, in their main text and footnotes, their reliance on earlier writers and works. "Historians and biographers have misread the complicated relationship between them," write Roberts and Smith. "Their respective biographers have ne-

glected to show that Ali and Malcolm were much more important to each other than previously acknowledged."

Not really. Did Manning Marable, whose 608-page *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (2011) was hailed as the definitive biography, fail to grasp the centrality of Ali in Malcolm's life, or the elusiveness of the boxer's psyche, when he wrote, "Few men would play such an outsized role in Malcolm's life as this enigmatic, irrepressible figure"? Nor does *Blood Brothers'* depiction of Ali's being "exploited" by the NOI, of Elijah Muhammad's privately disparaging his boxing ability, of Ali's fearing the brutality of the NOI after Malcolm's murder, differ so markedly from the accounts of Dave Kindred, quoted in *Blood Brothers* on the point, or of Mark Kram, the late *Sports Illustrated* writer and author of *Hosts of Manila: The Bateful Blood Deud etween Muhammad Ali and Joe Fraier* (2001):

Clay rushed toward the Muslims like an orphan, while the sect saw no utility in him, no gain, despite Malcolm X's interest. . . . The Muslim hierarchy barely knew who Clay was, while the troops in Miami filled his head with dogma and

# 2016 Post-Election Cruise

**Join Victor Davis Hanson, Allen West, Bing West, Heather Higgins, Steven Hayward, James Buckley, Jonah Goldberg, Andrew McCarthy, John Podhoretz, Neal Freeman, James Lileks, Kathryn Lopez, Eliana Johnson, Charles Cooke, Kevin Williamson, Jay Nordlinger, Ramesh Ponnuru, Jim Geraghty, Jillian Melchior, Rob Long, John J. Miller, Charmaine Yoest, John Hillen, David French, Ed Whelan, and Reihan Salam as we visit Ft. Lauderdale, Half Moon Cay, Cozumel, Grand Cayman, & Key West**

It's time for you to sign up for the *National Review* 2016 Post-Election Caribbean Cruise, certain to be the conservative event of the year. Featuring an all-star cast, this affordable trip—prices start at \$1,999 a person, with a \$100 per-person discount for anyone who signs up by February 29th—will take place November 13–20, 2016, aboard Holland America Line's beautiful MS *Nieuw Amsterdam*. From politics, the elections, the presidency, and domestic policy to economics, national security, and foreign affairs, there's so much to debate and review, and that's precisely what our conservative analysts, writers, and experts will do on the *Nieuw Amsterdam*, your floating luxury getaway for fascinating discussion of major events, trends, and the 2016 elections. Our wonderful group of speakers, there to make sense of politics, elections, and world affairs, includes acclaimed historian **Victor Davis Hanson**, former Congressman **Allen West**, terrorism and defense experts **Bing West**, **Andrew McCarthy**, and **John Hillen**, Independent Women's Forum chairman **Heather Higgins**, conservative icon and former U.S. Senator **James Buckley**, best-selling author and policy expert **Steven Hayward**, Americans United for Life president **Charmaine Yoest**, conservative legal expert **Ed Whelan**, NRO editors-at-large **Kathryn Lopez**, *Commentary Magazine* editor **John Podhoretz**, conservative media guru and former NR Washington Editor and WFB expert **Neal Freeman**, NR senior editors **Jonah Goldberg**, **Jay Nordlinger** and **Ramesh Ponnuru**, NR essayists **David French**, **Charles C. W. Cooke**, **Kevin D. Williamson**, and

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No wonder we're expecting over 500 people to attend! They'll enjoy our exclusive event program, which will include

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- two fun-filled "Night Owl" sessions;
- three revelrous pool-side cocktail receptions;
- late-night "smoker" featuring superior **H. Upmann** cigars (and complimentary cognac); and
- intimate dining on at least two evenings with a guest speaker or editor.

Surely, the *best* reason to come on the *National Review* 2016 Post-Election Caribbean Cruise is the luminary lineup. But talk about accentuating the positive: As we did in 2014, we're planning to expand the cruise experience by adding even more conservative superstars to our overall event package. On the night before the cruise—November 12th to be specific—we will be hosting a special gala at the Ft. Lauderdale Marina Hotel featuring a number of conservative titans who will be joining our editors for an exclusive (NR cruise attendees only, and at that, limited to 300 happy people on a first-come, first-served basis), intimate, and sure-to-be

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Stay tuned for more information. But be assured it will be a spectacular night.

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DAY/DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART	SPECIAL EVENT
SUN/Nov. 13	Ft. Lauderdale, FL		4:00PM	evening cocktail reception
MON/Nov. 14	Half Moon Cay, Bahamas	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar "Night Owl" session
TUE/Nov. 15	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
WED/Nov. 16	Georgetown, Grand Cayman	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
THU/Nov. 17	Cozumel, Mexico	11:00AM	11:00PM	morning seminar late-night Smoker
FRI/Nov. 18	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars "Night Owl" session
SAT/Nov. 19	Key West, FL	8:00AM	5:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
SUN/Nov. 20	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	7:00AM		Debarb



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And for those times when we are "at sea" or, well, you feel like staying on board rather than descending the gangway, the *Nieuw Amsterdam* (need I say it offers well-appointed, spacious state-rooms and countless amenities, and hosts a stellar staff that provides unsurpassed service and sumptuous cuisine?) has a classy, terrific spa, a must-attend Culinary Arts Center, pools, luxury boutiques, plenty of nooks and crannies to hide in with a good book, and, oh yeah, a casino!

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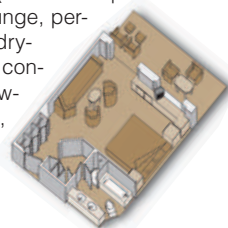
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<b>Categories C to N</b>	17-younger: \$ 567	18-up: \$ 748
<b>Category VC</b>	17-younger: \$ 617	18-up: \$ 798
<b>Categories SS &amp; SA</b>	17-younger: \$ 670	18-up: \$ 851

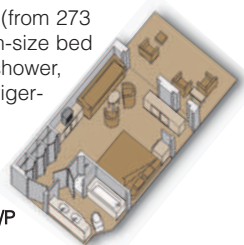
**DELUXE SUITE** Magnificent quarters (from 506 sq. ft.) features use of exclusive Neptune Lounge, personal concierge, complimentary laundry/dry-cleaning service, large private verandah, convertible king-size bed, whirlpool bath/shower, dressing room, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, safe, much more.



### Category SA

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 4,899 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 7,599</b>

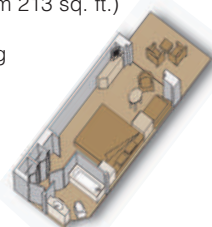
**SUPERIOR SUITE** Grand stateroom (from 273 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, TV/DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, safe, and much more.



### Category SS

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 3,799 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 5,999</b>

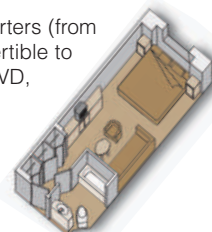
**DELUXE OUTSIDE** Spacious cabin (from 213 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), bath/shower, sitting area, mini-bar, TV/DVD, refrigerator, and floor-to-ceiling windows.



### Category VA

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 2,899 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 4,299</b>

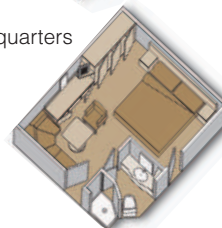
**LARGE OCEAN VIEW** Comfortable quarters (from 174 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), bathtub/shower, sitting area, TV/DVD, large ocean-view windows.



### Category C

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 2,399 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 3,299</b>

**LARGE INSIDE** Cozy but ample cabin quarters (from 151 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twins), shower, sitting area, TV/DVD.



### Category J

<b>DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 1,999 P/P</b>
<b>SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE:</b>	<b>\$ 2,699</b>



New Amsterdam





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Mailing address	
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Your legal first and last name are required for travel documentation. If you have an informal name you would like reflected on your name badge, please indicate it here:

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Preferred carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

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privately laughed at the idea of Clay beating Liston. . . . [Malcolm X's] murder would jolt Ali, drive home a point that he had given no thought; the Muslims played for keeps.

Roberts and Smith are hardly the first authors to overstate their analytic innovation; but *Blood Brothers* otherwise stands so tall as a testament to the value of real facts, of research and documentation, that the authors' deviation from their own code, presumably for marketing purposes, appears all the more glaring.

Also, their ending feels rushed. While Ali's regrets about his treatment of Malcolm X, articulated in a book of "reflections" he co-authored with his daughter in 2003, are duly recorded here, the disposition of the paternity lawsuits filed against Elijah Muhammad before his death, in February 1975, so central to Elijah's split with Malcolm X, goes unreported. Similarly, very little space is devoted to Ali's conversion, following Elijah's death, to Sunni Islam, and none at all to his conversion, three decades later, to Sufi Islam.

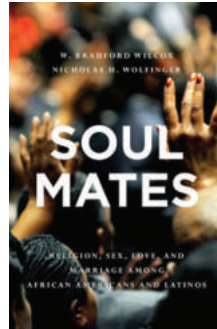
And the authors make no attempt to connect Ali's immersion in the NOI—which persisted to the end of his boxing career, with Elijah's son Herbert Muhammad as Ali's omnipotent manager—to the boxer's ultimate fate: fighting too long, taking too many blows to the head, and having his mouth and movement, once his hallmarks, cruelly stilled by Parkinson's syndrome. Are we to assume that Ali was receiving sound advice from Herbert Muhammad when the ex-champ, bloated at 38 and coming off a two-year layoff, signed to fight Larry Holmes? Was Ali at that point being driven solely by his own boredom and ego, or by financial straits worsened by the untold sums he had been compelled to fork over to the NOI? Here is the ultimate evidence that Malcolm X failed to instill in Ali a capacity for judging the motivations of those around him.

Ali's doctors stress that his condition is one of motor function, not cognition. His brain functions as it always has; the Louisville Lip simply has no ability to verbalize his thoughts. Thus it is, sadly, as true today as in February 1964, when Malcolm X marveled at the singularity of his friend, that no one knows the quality of the mind Muhammad Ali has got in there.

NR

# Love and Order

PETER WEHNER



*Soul Mates: Religion, Sex, Love, and Marriage among African Americans and Latinos*, by W. Bradford Wilcox and Nicholas H. Wolfinger (Oxford, 248 pp., \$27.95)

**I**N 2000, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D., N.Y.) was asked to identify the biggest change he had seen in his 40-year political career. Moynihan, a man of unusual wisdom, experience, and perspective, responded this way: "The biggest change, in my judgment, is that family structure has come apart all over the North Atlantic world." This change has occurred in "an historical instant," Moynihan said. "Something that was not imaginable 40 years ago has happened."

In order to help us better understand what has happened and why, two authors with different life experiences and worldviews—W. Bradford Wilcox of the University of Virginia (conservative, Catholic, and a married father) and Nicholas Wolfinger of the University of Utah (an unmarried, childless liberal, and a nonbeliever)—have written *Soul Mates: Religion, Sex, and Marriage among African Americans and Latinos*. As the subtitle implies, Professors Wilcox and Wolfinger discuss the influence exercised by churches on relationships and marriage among blacks and Latinos.

The authors begin the book by discussing the family revolution that has

swept across the United States over the last half century, a revolution characterized by unprecedented levels of non-marital childbearing, divorce, single parenthood, and multiple-partner fertility. "Marriage," Wilcox and Wolfinger write, "has been deinstitutionalized as the anchor of the adult life course and of family life itself." This has disproportionately affected Latinos and especially African Americans, the nation's two largest minority groups, who today make up a quarter of the American population and are projected to constitute more than 40 percent of the population in 2050.

In 1970, 57 percent of blacks were married; today, the figure is 25 percent. For Latinos, the corresponding figures are 72 percent and 47 percent. From 1980 to 2011, the percentage of children born outside wedlock rose for blacks from 56 to 72 percent and for Latinos from 24 to 53 percent. (For whites, the figure rose from 9 to 29 percent over the same period.) In 2011, 67 percent of black children, 40 percent of Latino children, and 25 percent of white children lived outside a two-parent, married family.

Wilcox and Wolfinger point out that most African Americans and Latinos will marry at some point in their lives, most of them are married or in a live-in relationship when they have children, and most black and Latino couples are happy and monogamous. Family life for these two groups, they argue, is more positive than some contemporary accounts convey. Yet there's no denying that the retreat from marriage in modern life has disproportionately affected them—and as a result, tremendous hardships have been inflicted on their children in particular. (Children raised in single-parent homes are much more likely to suffer from psychological problems such as depression, get in trouble with the law, live in poverty, and drop out of high school. Their chances of succeeding in life are a lot lower, the challenges they face a lot greater.)

*Soul Mates* argues that a "confluence of economic, policy, and cultural currents came together with sufficient force in the late 1960s and 1970s to generate a tidal wave of family change"—and African Americans and Latinos were most susceptible to its effects. The explanations, the authors argue, have to

*Mr. Wehner is a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center and a contributing opinion writer for the New York Times.*

do with history, most especially the poisonous effects of slavery, segregation, and other forms of discrimination; with culture, since Latinos and African Americans are more likely to be consumers of popular culture and therefore its messages of hedonism and radical individualism; and with structural issues such as deindustrialization, poverty, incarceration, and poor education. William J. Bennett once pointed out that an earthquake that struck Mexico City in the mid 1980s was less powerful than the one that would hit San Francisco only a few years later. But in Mexico City, the casualties were many times higher and the overall damage much worse. The reason? The amount of devastation often depends less on the magnitude of a quake than on the stability of the structures it affects. This is essentially what Wilcox and Wolfinger argue as to why African-American and Latino families have suffered disproportionately from the aftershocks of the family and sexual revolutions.

Analyzing the crack-up of the American family, including families among minority groups, is not a ground-breaking effort; scholars have been doing it for

decades, and Wilcox and Wolfinger rely on many of them in their book. But what *is* a genuinely new contribution is the book's examination of the role faith plays in shaping relationships, marriage, and family life.

According to *Soul Mates*, religion is an important bulwark against marital and family decomposition. The data and findings the authors amass are

## According to *Soul Mates*, religion is an **important bulwark** against marital and family decomposition.

impressive: Religious participation decreases infidelity and out-of-wedlock births and profoundly increases the likelihood that people will marry. Churchgoing Latinos and African Americans are significantly more likely to be gainfully employed, to steer clear of criminal activity or substance abuse, and to be happy compared with their peers who don't attend church or attend only infrequently. According to Wilcox and Wolfinger, religious faith "serves as an important source of personal,

familial, and communal strength for many Latinos and especially many African Americans."

Addressing those who claim that what is going on here is self-selection—that family-oriented people seek out religious institutions to reinforce their pre-existing orientation toward marriage and family life—the authors argue that the evidence indicates that "the effects

of religion are largely causal, and not representative of selection." (The basis for this finding is, in part, controlling for numerous social, demographic, and psychological differences between survey respondents.)

Professors Wilcox and Wolfinger repeatedly remind us that religion is no silver bullet. For instance, religion does not seem to have any impact on marital stability for blacks and Latinos (religious attendance does not reduce the divorce rate for either group, even as it substantially reduces divorce among whites). But overall there's no denying that religion is a force for good in African-American and Latino family life. Religion, for example, "helps sustain Latinos and Blacks in their efforts to be hardworking, temperate, law-abiding members of their communities who steer clear of the temptations of the street."

"Churches foster an ethic of care and reinforce a code of decency among their members," according to *Soul Mates*. (All of this explodes the silly claim by the late Christopher Hitchens that religion "poisons everything.")

One of the many virtues of this textured, balanced, and sober book is that it interjects compelling human stories to illustrate the authors' empirical findings. For example, we're introduced to Eduardo and Graciela Valdez, a Mexican-American couple from Spanish Harlem who were children of divorce and had experienced fractious family lives. But their faith led them toward marriage.

"This commitment came from that faith in God," Eduardo told the authors. He had faith in marriage "despite all my

### YOUR MOVE

"No modern poem was ever as obscure as Miss Sullivan's naming water *water* for Helen Keller."

—Walker Percy

When a bear hears ice crack he doesn't listen,  
He moves. He doesn't think *water* or know it  
And never begins articulating *ice*. He

Redistributes his weight one way or another.  
Cold and wet he feels; of *water* he knows nothing.  
Yet in that seam of ice he hears an Arctic chord.

At the end of a New York novel a man  
Trades sunglasses for bread. Helen Keller  
Began with water. So she knew it for the first time

After feeling it in her hands a thousand, blind  
And deaf, but understanding that *water* means  
And translating at last what the feeling meant.

The sunglasses? A pair of designer shades  
Almost weightless in his hand that he barters  
For bread, kneeling and tasting, trying to learn.

—LAWRENCE DUGAN



Text



brokenness, despite all my flaws,” he added. Graciela was “the only person that I believe, that I know, that loves . . . not just the good Eduardo, but also the broken Eduardo. And I felt called also to do the same thing for her.”

Loving another person in his or her brokenness is a beautiful description of what it means to be committed to another person for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do them part. This has never been easy, and in our age—in which relational commitments are increasingly attenuated, contingent, and impermanent; in which what the sociologist Daniel Bell called an ethic of self-expression and self-gratification now dominates—it might be harder than ever. There is a reason scholars refer to our “post-marriage” society.

To restore marriage in 21st-century America will require many things, including public policies that can help on the margins. *Soul Mates* briefly makes some recommendations, including eliminating marriage penalties and disincentives for the poor and for unwed mothers, expanding the earned-income tax credit, and increasing the child tax credit and funding for proven vocational-education and apprentice programs.

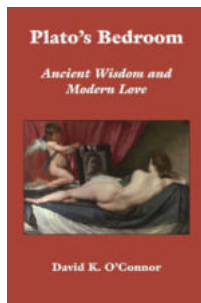
But what is most required to revivify marriage is what is most beyond the power of government to do: reconfigure the order of our loves. A marriage culture will be rebuilt one person at a time, through finding greater fulfillment in self-giving, elevating our affections and desires, and loving others as we love ourselves. None of us does this very well, and all of us could do it much better than we do. Yet for all the moral failures that can be laid at the feet of religion and those acting on its behalf, there is nothing in human history that has helped people improve their character and refine their loves more than faith.

Faith, it has been said, is an anvil that has worn out many hammers. We need it now more than ever, as the hammer of modernity has fractured our most precious human institutions, marriage and family, leaving much human wreckage behind.

Fortunately for those of us who are believers—in my case, a follower of Jesus—there is some comfort in knowing that our faith teaches us that what has been wrecked can also be redeemed. **NR**

# Explorations Of Love

THOMAS HIBBS



*Plato's Bedroom: Ancient Wisdom and Modern Love*, by David K. O'Connor  
(St. Augustine's Press, 320 pp., \$28)

**E**ARLY in this book, material for which originated in a highly successful Notre Dame course now available on iTunesU, philosopher and classicist David O'Connor puts the point of the investigation in direct and practical terms:

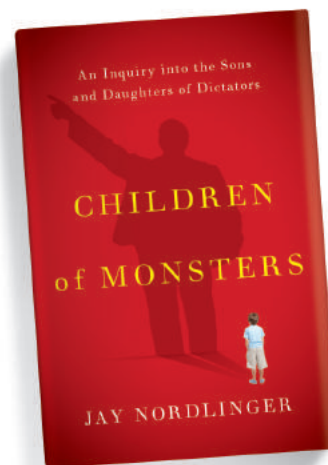
Is what you want a kind of intimacy with another person, an intimacy that creates within us a fearfulness, a fearfulness because we're being taken somewhere we don't control, and whose end we do not see, an end for better, for worse, till death? If that is what is in our heart when we find another human being erotically potent for us, then the question of how we can open our heart enough . . . to live that path, to move that way, becomes a central question for us. It's not just a philosophical question. It's a question that has to be made palpable and maybe even delightful for us to take it seriously.

Adopting the claim from the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein that the limits of our language constitute the limits of our world, O'Connor dissects the brittle, reductionist, and unimaginative discourse of love in the contemporary world. The deterioration of our language petrifies our experience of love, as our longings are deepened and enhanced by rich articulation. Noting that our vocabulary arises primarily from bureaucratic, medical dis-

*Mr. Hibbs is the dean of the Honors College at Baylor University. An updated and expanded version of his book Shows about Nothing was published in 2012.*

## JAY NORDLINGER'S CHILDREN of MONSTERS

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**I**t's a fascinating question: What's it like to be the son or daughter of a dictator? The offspring of a . . . Stalin? Or Mao? Or a tin-horn dictator from an African hell-hole? Jay Nordlinger's answers to these and other questions are engaging, witty, insightful, and make for a hell of a good read. Here's praise from outstanding historians for Jay and his outstanding book:

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**ANDREW ROBERTS:** "This extraordinary book makes us all ask of ourselves: What would we do if we realized that our beloved father was also a blood-stained tyrant? . . . Jay Nordlinger's exceptional investigation into the children of 20 modern dictators grips and convinces."

**PAUL JOHNSON:** "Jay Nordlinger is one of America's most versatile and pungent writers."

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course, he observes that we have turned the sublime activities and transforming experiences that the ancients connected with the presence of divinities (Eros and Venus) into dull, dispassionate, clinical descriptions. So eros is now understood as a transactional activity called sexual intercourse, and the etymology of Venus now surfaces in discussions of venereal disease. By contrast, in the classical tradition eros is connected with experiences of awe and ecstasy. It mediates between the human and the divine.

Perhaps especially in the area of love, what we need by way of articulation is not analytical argument. Indeed, the Plato of the erotic dialogues, most notably the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, is as concerned with rhetorical speeches, stories, and examples as he is with dialectical arguments. While attending to the philosophical arguments, O'Connor focuses on the literary features of the dialogues. In Plato's *Symposium*, which consists of a series of speeches about love, Socrates asserts that there is nothing concerning which he has more expertise than erotics.

The book is organized around a reading of the *Symposium*, one of the most famous speeches in which is that of the comic poet Aristophanes, who constructs a myth to explain the origin of eros. Our desire for union with another, our neediness and longing for completeness, is a quest for a reunion with our lost other half, from which we were severed by the gods as a punishment for human hubris. Aristophanes' comic myth proposes that we were once half of a whole, a rounded union of two. Aristophanes thus treats the couple as having an ontological primacy and sees us now not as whole individuals seeking other whole individuals but as ontological and emotional halves striving for reunion.

In Aristophanes' myth, there are similarities to the creation story in Genesis, which highlights the oneness of Adam and Eve, a story on which Jesus would later comment: "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and the two become one flesh." Yet, in the Genesis account, "humanity has not yet fallen" and "incompleteness is not a punishment." Our human desire for a partner is natural, writes O'Connor; indeed, it is part of "human perfection." When Eve is brought before Adam in the garden, "the experience overwhelms him, and his language, an expression of the pure joy of finally understanding what he needed all along, is a barely grammatical exclamation:

'Now this at last, bone from my bone, flesh from my flesh.'" O'Connor calls this the most erotic line ever spoken.

Of course, the story of the creation of Adam and Eve sees in their gendered complementarity an image of God ("in His image He created them; male and female He created them"), as is their gendered capacity to procreate ("God blessed them and said, 'be fertile and multiply'"). The notion of fertility and pregnancy as the inevitable and desirable result of the consummation of eros is also present in the *Symposium*. In Socrates' famous speech about love, the content of which he claims to have learned from a woman, Diotima, the lover seeks to penetrate and become one with the beloved and to bring forth offspring—whether on the physical or the spiritual plane.

By contrast with the ancient linking of eros and procreation, contemporary romances, especially in film, isolate and diminish the power of eros, rendering it merely an intimacy between two individuals. An exception can be found in Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* film series. Arwen, daughter of Elrond, is a half-elven who can choose either the immortality of the elves or the mortality of humans. After she falls in love with Aragorn, Elrond warns her on the basis of a vision he has of her future that a life with Aragorn will bring "only death." She counters that his vision is incomplete: "But there is also life. You saw there was a child—you saw my son!" O'Connor comments, "Her vision has revealed to her that the bitter harvest of mortality brings with it a most sweet fruit, the fruit of a new life, sprung from the union of the two lovers."

Our truncated understanding of eros leads to a strange asymmetry. Commenting on a scene of near sexual assault in Andre Dubus's short story "Out of the Snow," O'Connor wonders at the way in which our legitimate horror at assault finds no parallel in a positive expression of awe or reverence for the fulfillment of sexual attraction. He asks, "Shouldn't the seriousness of our dread and revulsion of a beating, a rape, a murder, find its full complement in the seriousness of our joy and gratitude for a caress, for lovemaking, for conception of new life?" He adds, "The laws of symmetry require the exaltation of the loving body to match the degradation of the broken one."

Far from offering solutions to the problems of eros, O'Connor follows the philosophers and artists who contain

and entertain diametrically opposed visions of eros. It would have been easy to write a book that contrasted the contemporary linguistic and imaginative bankruptcy concerning love with, say, a film such as *Ballet à l'est*, which reconciles bodily and spiritual appetite, the desire for beauty and the love of others. And O'Connor does offer an illuminating commentary on that film.

But his focus is rather on the tensions and paradoxes of love, which he finds most ambitiously investigated in Plato and Shakespeare. There is, first, the experience of falling in love, a phrase indicative of a loss of self-control, something that at best makes one look comically foolish and at worst puts one in a precarious and potentially self-destructive position of vulnerability. O'Connor examines these tensions not just in Shakespeare's plays but also in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, which probe the loss of self in erotic love and explore whether there are better and worse ways of losing oneself in love.

There is, second, the question of whether the idealism often involved in the lovers' vision of one another is an illusion best checked by rational self-defense or best welcomed as an invitation to transcendence of one's current state in favor of the self one previously could not have even dreamt of becoming. O'Connor puts the options thus: "When as lovers, we see something in our beloveds that goes beyond anything they usually can see in themselves, is this a vision—a glimpse of a wonderful truth that usually escapes us—or an illusion—a mere wish fulfillment, in which we pretend to see what isn't there at all?" If it is the latter, then it would be best to avoid love. But if it is the former, if the "real you is that divine and sacred self that the lover discovers in an inchoate experience of erotic restlessness, then this projection is no mere fantasy. It is the vehicle of your self-knowledge, the ecstasy of finding yourself more truly and more strange in a mythic exemplar."

O'Connor does a magnificent job of interweaving reflections on philosophy, literature, and film into a series of readable and practical discussions of love, discussions in which readers will discover dramatic displays, both tragic and comic, and eloquent articulations of their deepest passions and aversions, attractions and fears, in the arena of erotic desire. The book is a welcome and delightful corrective to our impoverished discourse about love. **NR**



Film

# Faith in Hollywood

ROSS DOUTHAT

**T**HE last time I wrote about the Coen brothers' world-picture in these pages, reviewing their Job-in-Minnesota movie, *A Serious Man*, I suggested that the elusive auteurs were "proudly mysterian"—making movies that consistently wrestle with the possibility that some god or fate governs human life but never come around to any kind of firm metaphysical conclusion.

After seeing their latest entertainment, *Hail, Caesar!*, I would like to amend that analysis just a little bit. It isn't so much that every Coen movie is equally mysterian; it's that the brothers seem to deliberately inhabit different metaphysical perspectives in different films. Thus—to pick recent examples—*A Serious Man* was essentially a Jewish story set in a cosmos governed by the demanding yet inscrutable Hashem. *True Grit* was as Calvinist as its undaunted protagonist, Mattie Ross. *No Country for Old Men* was genuinely mysterian, in the dark, God-haunted style of its Cormac McCarthy source. *Burn after Reading* was bleakly nihilistic, a *Seinfeld* episode with spies and mayhem.

And now, with *Hail, Caesar!*, we have the Coens' most Catholic film—as successfully and even earnestly Catholic, it must be said, as anything from a director actually raised in the Roman faith.

The movie's Catholicity may be slightly obscured by the fact that it's officially an Old Hollywood picture, set in the last days of the studio system and shot through with nostalgia for the tropes and genres of that era. The lead is Eddie Mannix (a glowering Josh Brolin), a fixer at Capitol Pictures, where he has to manage a cavalcade of personalities: the pregnant starlet (Scarlett Johansson), the twin-sister gossip columnists (Tilda Swinton and Tilda Swinton), the pretentious European director (Ralph Fiennes, perfect), the Kelly/Crosby song-and-dance man (Channing Tatum), and the twanging Western star (Alden Ehrenreich) whom the God-like studio head has



George Clooney and Josh Brolin in *Hail, Caesar!*

decreed will make the transition to Cary Grantish suavity. But his biggest problem is his biggest star: Baird Whitlock (George Clooney), who's supposed to be headlining a *Ben-Hur*-ish epic, *Hail, Caesar: A Tale of the Christ*, but has been kidnapped.

The quest to solve the kidnapping provides the movie's narrative spine, but really *Hail, Caesar!* is more interested in the wider human comedy of the studio life. Mannix, the fixer, carries a heavy burden—one might even say a cross—and he's contemplating taking a job at Lockheed instead: easier hours, better pay, less responsibility, plus the chance to get in on the Cold War action. But without him, what would happen to the stars, the directors, the extras, the fans? How would this actor know which actress to date? How would that director know how to cope with his seemingly hopeless new leading man? How would past sins be kept from scandalous exposure, and present scandals resolved with a minimum of fuss?

A number of reviews of this film have cast it as a critique of the studio system, fond but also cutting in its depiction of how Old Hollywood manipulated its talent, micromanaged their lives, and sold their fans on a gossamer illusion while keeping the seamy truth safely under wraps. I don't doubt that the Coen brothers would agree that *in reality* the old system was oppressive and sexist and overly censorious. But that kind of critique isn't what *Hail, Caesar!* is really offering. In the context of the film, the

studio is essentially benevolent, and its fixer a good shepherd, steering and rescuing his straying sheep.

Indeed, in a story drenched in Catholic imagery—Mannix begins his journey in a confessional and ends it staring at the three crosses from his sword-and-sandal epic's set—the studio plays like, well, a devout Catholic's idea of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. It's a corporate entity populated by a motley array of knaves and sinners, in which true happiness generally belongs to those who trust the studio's wisdom, who accept their appointed roles, and who let themselves be guided by its rules and strictures rather than rebelling against them.

The rebels against this benevolent order, meanwhile, are portrayed as well-intentioned but basically deluded: They're a pack of disgruntled Communist screenwriters who bicker about the dialectic, gripe about their pay, and are revealed to be dupes of a Lower Power. (The portrait of Red Hollywood made me wish *Hail, Caesar!* had opened the same week as last fall's *Trumbo*.) And anyone seduced by their patter needs to be drawn—or slapped—back onto the true path, which for both Mannix and the kidnapped Whitlock ends at the foot of the cross.

The movie's vision of Old Hollywood, then, is basically borrowed from Saint Paul. *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ*. And so it is with Roman Cathol—er, Capitol Pictures as well. **NR**

## Straight Outta Calgary



Text

**T**RUE story: More than a decade ago, I wrote a cover story for NATIONAL REVIEW on the pressing need to bomb Canada. In my cogent and searching essay, titled “Bomb Canada: The Case for War,” I made the argument that Canada needed toughening up. A once serious country was in danger of becoming a self-parody. Its self-anointed status as a moral superpower was exactly the kind of thing that would get Vladimir Putin to laugh milk through his nose (if by “milk” you mean vodka).

I’ve always felt a little bad about the piece, for several reasons. First, picking on Canadians is like smooshing an ice-cream cone in an Amish guy’s face (and Harrison Ford is never around). Also, Rich Lowry, as is his wont, went for tabloid sensationalism. He put a picture of Canadian Mounties on the cover with the word WIMPS! splashed across it. That was unfair, given that the tradition of the Mounties is what I believed Canada needed to get back to.

And then there was that other thing. Unbeknownst to me, or anyone in the editorial ranks, the U.S.–Canada Partnership for Growth had bought an ad run in the magazine. Such is the ethical absolutism of this journal that we not only maintain a high wall between the business side and the word-making side (our motto: “We use words goodly!”), but we make sure it is totally soundproof as well. So when the issue hit the stands it was all “Bomb Canada” on the front and “Two Great Countries That Go Great Together” on the back. (That’s not an exact quote; I may be thinking of the Reese’s Peanut Butter Cup commercial. “Hey, you got poutine in my hamburger!” “Aw, you got hamburger in my poutine, eh?”)

Needless to say, we lost that account.

But I’ve recently come to think that maybe I wasn’t tough enough on our northern neighbor.

That notion occurred to me while listening to Donald Trump explain why he “lost” the Iowa caucuses. I put quotes around “lost” because Trump insists that he didn’t really lose. He says that Ted Cruz stole his Iowa victory by spreading misinformation—that Ben Carson was dropping out of the race. I’d rather not get into all of that, though; what I found interesting was this remark from Trump: “What kind of people do we have running for office?” he said in Milford, N.H., taking dead aim at Cruz’s character. “No, it’s honestly really, really dishonest. And I think I know why. You know why? Because he was born in Canada!”

Note that this is a different argument from Trump’s usual “birther” charge. He is not saying that Cruz’s status as a

“natural-born citizen” is constitutionally suspect. Nor is he insinuating, again as he often does, that Cruz is being dishonest about his secret Canadian citizenship. No, he’s saying that Cruz is dishonest *because he was born in Canada*. In other words, these stinking Canadians are coming down here and stealing our elections, our very democracy.

And I am beginning to think he may be right.

First, let us review some facts. During the Seven Years’ War, what would become French Canada attacked what would become America. During the American Revolution and the War of 1812, proto-Canada was a hotbed of loyalists and royalists eager to see the United States smothered in the crib. This is why Ben Franklin wrote in his autobiography, “Canada delenda est” (“Canada must be destroyed”).

Sure, since Canada became a country, it has fought with us in some world wars, and it deigns to play in our baseball league. But perhaps that was just to lull us into a false sense of security; *Homo canadensis* is famously patient. Have you noticed how deeply Canadians have infiltrated the United States? Game-show hosts (Alex Trebek, Monty Hall), comedians (all of them, minus some of the Jewish ones and three of the black ones), singers (Paul Anka, Joni Mitchell, Robert Goulet, that woman who sang the *Titanic* song), journalists (Peter Jennings, Morley Safer): The list goes on and on. But no matter how long it gets, there’s one job that doesn’t appear: president of the United States. Sure, they’ve made inroads into our political system. Jennifer Granholm was governor of Michigan. But the brass ring has eluded them.

Perhaps Donald Trump has punctured the conspiracy. He alone recognizes that Cruz has been a long-dormant sleeper, the much feared but never confirmed “Manitoban candidate” lurking in plain sight. How brilliant of Ted Cruz to master the U.S. Constitution. The better to hide behind it, eh?

I mean, have you ever noticed that there’s something vaguely not right about Ted Cruz? Something just slightly off? Unlike Al Gore, who is almost surely an extraterrestrial, Cruz is subtly insidious: a Tim Hortons–swilling Canuck, heck-bent on shoving the metric system down our throats.

Thank goodness Donald Trump spotted it when no one else could or would.

Or so I thought. Just days after he called out Canadian perfidy by name, after weeks of insisting that Ted Cruz could never be on the ballot for president because of the maple syrup that runs through his un-American veins, Trump told radio-show host Hugh Hewitt that he’s open to making Cruz his vice president.

The stinking Canadians got to Trump. And if they can get to him, they can get to any of us.

NR

These  
stinking  
Canadians  
are coming  
down here  
and stealing  
our elections,  
our very  
democracy.

# 5

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